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DUCHENIER. p. 45.

Duchenier:

or

The Revolt of La Vendée.

By the Author of "Stories of the Crusades."

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TO THE

REV. J. G. YOUNG, M.A.

This Tale is dedicated,

IN REMEMBRANCE OF MANY HAPPY HOURS

SPENT IN HIS COMPANY.

MAGNUM ILLA TERRIS INTULERAT METUM
PRÆCEPS AHENAS RUMPERE COPIAS,
TABOQUE FUMANTES ET IGNI
AUSA COHORS OPERIRE CAMPOS:
SI NON HONESTI LÆTA PERICULI
BELLIQUE METAS RUMPERE PERTINAX
EQUOS ET ARMORUM CUPIDO
NON HUMILES ITERARE PUGNAS,
MANES AVORUM QUÆ BENE PROSPERIS
EXCUSET ARMIS.

CASIMIR. I. XX. 29.

Notice.

It is hoped that the following tale will convey a tolerably correct idea of the principles which actuated the French Loyalists during that period of the Revolution which intervened between the downfal of the Girondists, May 1793, and the fall of Robespierre, July 27, 1794. Some trifling anachronisms have been allowed, for the sake of including one or two remarkable occurrences, which must otherwise have been omitted; but the most unlikely event in the whole story, the ride to La Flêche in the fifth chapter, is strictly founded on fact.

January 1, 1848.

Duchenier;

OR

THE REVOLT OF LA VENDÉE.

CHAPTER I.



T was a stormy morning in May. The west wind was sweeping heavy masses of clouds from the Atlantic ocean; and the sun, that now and then gleamed forth with a watery brightness, was soon blotted out by some fresh wreath of vapour, and the shower came on again.

But sun or rain seemed to make little difference to two officers, who, mounted on excellent though now somewhat wearied horses, were hurrying through one of the obscure lanes that leads from Bressuire to Cerisay, in La Vendée. Sometimes it plunged into the heart of a little copse, where the birds, sheltered from the shower, were singing as merrily as if all were peace around them; sometimes it led out on to the ridge of a down, on either side of which might be seen the neat white farm—neat enough to be like the farms of England—its well-kept enclosure, and the twenty or thirty oxen that were feeding in the adjacent pasture; anon it swept down into the valley, and crossed the little stream that sparkled and bubbled in the sunlight on the bright summer-day, but now poured along, one turbid, swollen, discoloured mass of foam. Occasionally the cottage of the labourer stood

on the lane-side; that cottage which—for the sun had not long risen—was now pouring out its tenants to their daily labour. And so the travellers journeyed on, though in truth they took no great interest in the scene around them, except when they passed the peasant going forth to his work. Then a few kind words were interchanged on both sides,—though rather in general by the younger of the officers, than by his older and graver companion.

"In good sooth, Duchenier," said the latter, "I could never have found my way to this Cerisay of yours without your direction. In my own part of the country, hedge, lane, cottage, *métairie*, I know them all far and near; and I would thread our labyrinth of downs the darkest night in the year, from Montaigu to Clisson. But here it is quite another thing; and I must have waited for daylight before I pushed on. So there would have been four or five hours lost, though God knows" (and he raised his cap) "we have little time to spare."

"It is not three or four months that could make me forget Cerisay," replied the other; "and I long to see it again with all my heart. But how our good neighbours there stand affected to the cause, I will not take upon me to say; for they have never yet, you know, been called on for their quota. This, I know, that no one is more generally loved, and, by my good troth, no one has more right to be loved, than M. de Beaurepaire; and if he would but take an active part in leading the peasantry the right way, this spring must have done wonders in changing those who were never changed before, did they not follow him."

"We will hope better things, Duchenier," answered his friend. "Before this last great stroke, when Bressuire was not in our hands, we had grounds to fear that the universal terror of the dragoons might keep the peasants back. Now they think themselves invincible; and while they think so, they will be so."

"Such a cause must make us all so, M. de Lescure," said Duchenier.

"Think so as much as you will," returned M. de Lescure; "but if we succeed eventually—though, I grant you, we

have hitherto succeeded beyond human belief—it will be by miracle. I do not despair; but if I looked to possibilities, I should call our hopes madness. I have private intelligence from Paris, that the Convention are beginning to regard the insurrection as formidable: they are incorporating new regiments there, and drafting-in picked soldiers from the army of the North. Then Westermann is marching from Le Mans; that fiend, Santerre, from Chartres, or Orleans; and they talk of Kleber too. If Quetineau only holds his own till they form a junction with him, woe to the Catholic army!"

"But we *must* drive him out, M. de Lescure; he cannot resist for long."

"If he knew our weakness as well as we know his, he could, Duchenier; but that is what the Convention have got to learn. We must muster strongly, however, and not lose one village that we can gain. Is that the church? The road seems to bear directly on it."

"That is Cerisay," said Duchenier. "We will ride to the priest's house. He will do more for us than any one else."

"I thought you would be eager to be at the chateau of M. de Beaurepaire," said Lescure, with a grave smile.

"So I am—so I am—on fire to be there; but, for heaven's sake, don't let us lose time. My affairs can wait: those of the Catholic army cannot."

The horsemen rode into the little village. The peasant's wife came to the door of her cottage, and looked after them; children ran along the street and cried, "*Vive le Roi! Vivent les brigands!*" one or two old men doffed their hats; the blacksmith left the shoe he was fashioning on the anvil, and shouted, from lungs somewhat resembling his own bellows, "*Vive l'armée Catholique!*"

"They seem honest to the backbone," said M. de Lescure.

"I knew they would be—I knew they must be.—Ah, Pierre, how goes it with you? I shall see you presently at the church.—What, Colette! you out so early? Where is M. l'Abbé? at the church?—We will ride there, M. de Lescure, if you please; it is nearer than the priest's house. I dare say he has just said mass."

They drew up before the church. It lay on the north side of the road, with its packsaddle tower and flamboyant chancel and nave. The good priest was standing at the southern door, looking out into the village. The clouds were dispersing; the sun was looking down with a warmer and brighter glow; every blade of grass sparkled as with rare jewellery; smoke curled up here and there from the better sort of cottages; the old grey rood — tradition said that it had been erected at the expense of Du Guesclin — rose in the midst of the churchyard, and hallowed the rest of the sleepers; and the various oaken crosses scattered here and there on the greensward, bore, in ruder or more polished language, one and all the same expression of faith, and the same prayer for mercy. On three or four a garland of fresh spring-flowers was still hanging — and the raindrops glistened on it, as if to symbolise the tears of those that had placed it there; just as the colours in which those raindrops were invested were no unmeet emblem of the hope of a better life which accompanies the tears of Christians for a departed friend.

"Your priest is *insermenté*, I trust?" inquired M. de Lescure.

"Do you take me for a heathen?" asked his friend. "Yes, yes; he wrote to the superintendent of the district to say that he meant to take the oath, so far as he could do it without injury to the rights of the Church or of the Holy See. But a few days after he wrote again to say that he had altered his mind, and would not take it at all. However, they took no notice: and so he stays on."

The old man came forward to meet them as they dismounted.

"GOD be praised, my son!" he said to M. Duchenier, "that I see you here again safe, and — if I may judge from your countenance — well. And I may also express the same joy at seeing your friend, though I have not the pleasure of being acquainted with him: for I see that he is engaged in the same good cause with yourself."

"He is, father, and that much more effectually. It is M. de Lescure."

"GOD bless and reward you, monsieur," said the priest,

taking off his cap, "for all that you have done for France! Whether you succeed or fail, the merit is the same; and doubtless the recompense on high will be the same too."

"I am much obliged to you, M. l'Abbé, for your high appreciation of my poor services. I have tried to do my duty; and I hope I have not much failed in it. But our errand brooks not delay. We are here for the purpose of raising, if it might be so, the parish: we have an important enterprise in hand, and we have need of every man and youth that La Vendée can send forth. You will assist us?"

"Willingly, my son. Henri, ring the tocsin: that will bring them together. Step this way into the sacristry, messieurs; there you shall tell me more. The church will be full in a quarter of an hour."

The priest said right. The tocsin rang out loud and clearly, and, as if by magic, the little street of Cerisay seemed peopled at once. Peasants threw down their mattock or their axe; the farmer left his yard, the miller his mill; the hedger came, bill in hand; the good wife set her spinning-wheel in the corner and went forth, not forgetting to tell little Jeannette to take good care of her little brother and the baby; venerable old men, who could remember the times of Louis Quatorze; striplings, who could not recollect aught but years of reform and revolution,— all poured into the church; and in low and reverent voices — for reverence was the very life and soul of the Vendeans — discussed the character of the summons.

"It is for the Catholic army," said the farmer.

"Our Lady bless it!" cried old Louis the cordwainer. "If it be, I will strike one stroke for it."

"Are the blues nigh at hand, then?" asked Rose Arbalest, a young mother, who, with her one baby, had followed the crowd.

"*A bas les bleus!*" cried Pierre Texier the weaver. "They near? Not they indeed! Why, Maître Cathelineau has taken good order for that. He picks them off as neatly as my bobbins take the thread from my swifts."

"They want to enlist us," said Jean Arbalest. "Well, I'm their man. I never handled much but a flail; but Maître Godard here knows that I can swing that with the best."

"Ay, Jean, that you can," said the farmer appealed to: "and I'll warrant you would lay it about a dragoon with as hearty good will as ever you did about our sheaves."

"You may say that, master," answered the thresher. "Cheer up, Rose, cheer up; I shall come to no harm:—we shall drive back more men than ever the Convention can send. Why, you would not have me sit at home like a girl?"

"My wife will take good care of you, Rose," said the farmer; "I can answer for that,'though I shall be away too. —But who is in the sacristy with Father Laval?"

"One of them is young M. Duchenier," answered Pierre: "I met him but now in the street; and he had a good word for me, as he ever had. But who the other was I cannot say: a stately man, and of a good presence, though."

"Hush!" cried more than one voice; "here they come." And accordingly the priest and the two officers came from the sacristy (which, according to the vicious practice of the day, was behind the altar), and went towards the pulpit. The priest ascended it: Lescure and Duchenier stood at the bottom of the steps.

"My children," said the Abbé, "you have heard much of the evil doings of those men whom GOD, partly, I hope, for the trial of our faith, and partly, I fear, for the punishment of our sins, has been pleased at this time to set over this nation. You know that they have driven out the greater number of your bishops and priests; that they have killed your king; that they are making you send out your sons to a war you detest; that they have voted an enlistment of three hundred thousand men; that they have murdered thousands and thousands of innocents, whose blood cries to Heaven against them; and that they wish to make you suffer the same miseries that they have brought to pass in other parts of France. You know also that the brave men of La Vendée, trusting in GOD and their good cause, have risen against these traitors and rebels; and, calling themselves the Royalist and Catholic army, have hitherto fought with good success. But they need more men, for the Republicans are pouring down upon them in all quarters. They need the assistance of this part of the country, and they apply to you for it first. You shall

hear the requisition, which this gallant officer, M. de Lescure, will read to you."

De Lescure stood forward, and read as follows: "In the name of GOD, *de par le roi*. The parish of Cerisay is invited to furnish as many men as it can to the Catholic army, at the Pont de S. Jean, near Thouars, by nine o'clock in the evening of the 4th of May. Provisions for two days to be brought."

"You hear," said the good priest, "the service to which you are called, my children; and I, as set over you by GOD, call upon you in His name, cheerfully to lay down your lives, if need be, in this, which is His cause rather than ours. I shall go with those that go: they will need counsel if they live, they will need absolution if they fall,—both I will be ready to bestow. Come forth, my children, into the churchyard: the names of those who will offer themselves shall be taken down; and I am sure that no man will be such a traitor to his country, or such a hypocrite to his GOD, as, having put his hand to the plough, to turn back."

The little crowd flocked out into the churchyard; a table, pen, ink, and paper were brought; and Duchenier, sitting down, proceeded to enrol the volunteers. "Put my name down!" "Put me down!" "I spoke first!" "I will go, monsieur!" "Have you put my name down?" poured in so fast on the officer, that once or twice he was obliged to desire the volunteers to stand back, and to give him room and time. In the mean while the inquiry, whispered at first, became louder: "What is it for?" "Where are we going?" "Who will lead us?"

"My friends," said De Lescure, "it must be enough for you to know that an important enterprise is afoot, the day after to-morrow, which you are invited to join. More I cannot tell you now; for one great help to our success will be our keeping the matter secret. M. Duchenier will be one of your leaders; I myself another: him you know well enough to be sure that he is worthy to lead you, and that he would not act with those who are unworthy of his confidence. The place and time hold, whatever you may hear to the contrary, as in these unsettled times there are rumours almost every hour."

There were joyful shouts of *Vive le Roi!* as Lescure ended; and, in the mean time, the business of enlistment went on with great rapidity. In about half an hour it appeared that the volunteers were exhausted; and Duchenier, turning with a smile to his brother officer, said: "We have eighty-five good men and true: I did not exaggerate.—Now," he continued, speaking to the peasants, "home with you, one and all: get what arms you can, especially fire-arms: if any one has gunpowder, he must bring that too; as much bread as he can conveniently carry: and let no one forget his white cockade. Meet me here by six o'clock tomorrow morning; for we must make a long day's march of it.—Come, De Lescure, you must want breakfast; and if not, I do: let us to the chateau.—Father, will you come with us? We shall have need of your advice and help."

"I will follow you presently, my son. Ride you on before: there are those, I know, that are expecting you."

"Good advice, M. l'Abbé," cried Duchenier, springing into his saddle. "Let us ride, monsieur."

"They are likely men, those peasants of yours," observed Lescure; "a stronger set than our Angevins. I suppose they will be armed no better than the rest?"

"Worse, I should fear," said Duchenier. "But they have good bold hearts. Will you stay with us till to-morrow? They will be too happy to take you in, I am sure: and I can answer, you know, for M. de Beaurepaire, as I would for my own father."

"I doubt it not, Charles," returned De Lescure: "but I have other business in hand. I must summon the parishes between here and Argenton, round by Chatillon, as near as I can venture to the Blues: so that I have a good day's work before me, and the council meets at six."

"I believe I ought to go with you," said Duchenier.

"Don't think of it," replied M. de Lescure. "I need no one's guidance in broad daylight: I will keep clear of danger, if I can: and you will be much more usefully employed in urging things on here. Come, a truce to the army for the present; when does your marriage take place?"

"Why, had it not been for these commotions, it would

have been fixed before now: now, I suppose, not till we are victorious:—and," he continued, after a pause, "if we are not so, I suppose never."

"Nay, that does not follow," said De Lescure. "You are not to throw your life away, if it shall not please GOD to bless our arms. But we will trust to Him for better things. I hope to see you and your bride at Clisson, ere many months. I can assure you, I have heard much of her from Victorine."

"You shall judge of her for yourself in a few moments," replied Duchenier, "for there is the chateau; as stately and as solemn as in the days of Louis Quatorze. My future father-in-law piques himself on its being kept in the same state that it was in the time of old Arnald de Beaurepaire; he that was one of the most noted gallants in the court of Anne of Austria. He laid out the grounds: and M. de Beaurepaire would think it sacrilege to alter his work."

They turned out of the road, and passing up an avenue of cedars, dark and gloomy, came out in that which was by courtesy called a pleasure-garden, stiff, formal, laid out in squares, hexagons, and other mathematical figures, sheltered on the north by a hedge of yew, and commanded on the east by the house itself. The chateau had been a fine one: but the then owner had employed a court architect to rebuild it in the time of Louis XIV. This he had done in what was then considered the grand style: the front of the quadrangle, of which the chateau originally consisted, was pulled down, and re-edified with long wings, and a great portico: but the three other sides were not removed, money having failed the proprietor, and therefore now projected, a somewhat useless excrescence, behind. M. de Beaurepaire himself had served with distinction in the German wars; and had been absent from his mansion a longer time than was usual with the aristocracy of La Vendée. Hence, perhaps, arose a stiffness and haughtiness of manner not usual with them, and rather in accordance with that of the noblesse in other parts of France. But he was a kind-hearted man, notwithstanding this defect: and though not entering eagerly into the projects of the insurgents, nor personally intermeddling in their affairs, was known to be well disposed

towards the movement; and to be not unlikely, should it assume an appearance of success, to join it himself.

The servant, who appeared in answer to the ringing of Duchenier, informed the visitor that his master was not yet visible, for it was not more than between seven and eight o'clock. He ushered them through a long passage, hung with tapestry, into a kind of saloon, called Monsieur's Chamber—a prince of the blood-royal having once been entertained here. In a few moments he returned, bringing chocolate, and other refreshments; and informing M. Duchenier that his master would do himself the honour of coming down soon.

M. de Lescure was not a man to lose time; so, after giving a glance at the two or three ancient portraits, never good, and now much decayed, that ornamented the walls, he turned to the window, and occupied himself with the scene; not exactly as a soldier, not exactly as a lover of nature, but with a feeling involving both characters.

"You have a good view hence," he said. "Duchenier, what are those hills yonder, that shut in the horizon to the south?"

"The Gatines," replied his friend. "You would be well served from thence. They are somewhat wild and rude; but anti-revolutionists to a man."

"Counter-revolutionists, you should say," returned Lescure; "it is the word in vogue now. But did it never strike you, Charles, how admirably defensible a post this would make? The terrace here—those old ruins to the right—then that stream yonder in the valley—the windows of the chateau —and that clump of trees to the left: they would be just the thing for our guerilla warfare."

"I have been so much occupied," said Duchenier, "with other thoughts than those of war, while looking from this window, or strolling in the garden, that I cannot say it ever struck me in that light; but I see it now you point it out. Heaven grant we never have cause to learn it practically!"

"Amen," returned Lescure; "nevertheless, if ever it should come to that, remember my words."

At this moment the door opened, and M. de Beaurepaire entered the room. He greeted Duchenier with warmth;

bowed politely, but somewhat ceremoniously, to De Lescure, and begged them both to be seated.

"I was aware of your coming, M. de Lescure; and had I known you were likely to be so early, I should have been up to receive you. You will excuse me, I trust. I hope your success in the village yonder has been satisfactory?"

"Perfectly so, monsieur; thanks to my friend here, and to your excellent priest. I find the same enthusiasm every where: it needs but a spark to kindle the whole into a blaze."

"I am somewhat old, as you see, M. de Lescure, and shrunk"—here the speaker looked with complacency at his yet well-rounded calf—"but I shall trust to join you yet. The fact is, I am at this moment in negotiation for the transfer of a very considerable sum of money I have at Paris,—yours, some day, Charles, you know—aha, M. Lescure, young people will be young people—and till that be safely bestowed, I am unwilling openly to declare myself."

"Are you not afraid that your tenantry may compromise you?" demanded M. de Lescure.

"I have issued strict orders," said the other with a smile, "that no one should enlist. You understand me: if they choose to do it against my will, I cannot help it, you know."

"Certainly not, monsieur," said De Lescure, with the slightest possible contempt in his tone.

"And now, monsieur, what is the disposition of the army? I have heard rumours, and that is all. I should be glad to hear it on good authority. But, first of all, Charles, as you are probably acquainted with it already, you may, if you please, step into the winter-parlour. I believe you will not be long alone there.—Poor fellow," he continued, when Duchenier had left the room, "I have not forgotten what it was to be young myself; we must make allowances. Allow me to give you some more chocolate. The attack, I presume, is on Thouars?"

"It is so, monsieur," replied De Lescure; "we must command the Thoué. But the thing is a secret to the peasantry. We shall be able to concentrate thirty-six thousand men on that post. My own detachment—they honour it, you know, with the name of *la grande armée*,—deducting all garrisons,

and the *corps de reserve* at Bressuire, will muster pretty nearly twenty thousand;—then there is Cathelineau, with his Angevins,—Royeau, with the Montaigu men, he reckons nearly twelve thousand,—Stofflet, and the parish of Maulevrier; and De la Rochejacquelein, with the Chatillon troops."

"Quetineau is no coward; he will defend the river. What may his numbers be?"

"We have no certain intelligence; vastly inferior to our own. Our plans are not absolutely determined; but we talk of attempting the river at four points."

"Provisions, monsieur, are you well off for them?"

"Not very. But we seldom have much difficulty on that score. You see, Monsieur de Beaurepaire, this system of our peasants returning to their homes every four or five days, whatever disadvantages it may have, is beneficial in that way. They can all the more easily furnish themselves with bread, and they care not much for any thing else. Still, this affair may be longer; and as we are determined never to suffer any pillage, we may be hardly put to it, if we are fortunate enough to take Thouars."

"If the recruits find a dozen of oxen on the road which used to belong to me," said De Beaurepaire, "I shall take care to have them informed that they may drive them on. No thanks, pray! The time may come when I shall be able to assist you more effectually. I am afraid this affair will not, at this moment, allow me the honour of entertaining you for any length of time. I trust that hereafter you may be considered a visit in my debt."

"You do me honour, monsieur," said De Lescure. "But indeed I must be riding almost instantly, for I have work to do before night. I would learn, if possible, something of the character of the people I am to visit, before I set off: I wish to raise the parishes towards Chatillon and Argenton."

"You will find them, M. de Lescure, much the same as in other parts of La Vendée. Easy landlords, with very moderate incomes, taking an interest in all that interests their tenantry; the judges of all their differences, the arbitrators in all matters of taste, very frequently the directors of all their games: looked upon, in short, more in the light of an elder

brother than as any thing else. And, as a natural consequence, the people are ardently attached to them. You will find the cry every where the same—and the same, I suppose, it is at Clisson, *Vivent le roi, la noblesse, et les prêtres!* And certainly they have good reason to love the clergy; for there is not a more painstaking set of men on the face of the earth. I, monsieur, am something of a freethinker; you, I know, are not. Well, every man must judge for himself. But I mention this, to shew that I am not a witness prejudiced in favour of the priesthood."

"They are, indeed, the peasant's best friend here," said Lescure; "and their heroic self-devotion in our army is beyond praise. They venture as far in danger as any one; but they will not shed blood. They go to encourage, to comfort, and to confess; and some carry pistols for their personal protection—for confession on a field of battle is always a work of danger—but further than that they never interfere."

"And now, monsieur," said Beaurepaire, "I ask it in confidence, is there any hope of assistance from beyond the sea?"

"We have as yet received no intelligence—in fact, there has scarcely been time to do so. And England is always slow. At present, indeed, it would hardly be advisable for the princes to declare themselves; could De la Charrette master Nantes, or could we gain possession of Noirmoutier, we should have free communication with the sea, and the stake might be thrown with better chance of success. But the insurrection is but in its infancy—it might be merely a Girondist rising, like that of Normandy; or it might be crushed in the bud, for all that the English ministry can at present tell."

"I am obliged to you, monsieur, for your frankness," said De Beaurepaire. And he led the conversation to indifferent subjects.

In the mean time Duchenier, threading the somewhat intricate passages of the chateau as easily as he had done the downs of La Vendée that same morning, came into the room called the winter-parlour. It lay to the east; and consequently in the old part of the house. Marie de Beaurepaire preferred it to any other, perhaps chiefly because it had been a favourite of

her mother's; and its window commanded a view, through a gap in a low chain of downs, of the distant spire of Bressuire. The room was well filled with books and pictures: one of Madame de Beaurepaire hung over the mantelpiece; one of her husband opposite to it. The books that lay about were not those of the character then most appreciated in France. There was a volume of Racine, one or two of Boileau, one of Desmaret, and the first tome of one of Scudery's interminable romances. But Rousseau, the sure tenant of a lady's boudoir in Paris, and the *Henriade* or any other work of Voltaire's, you might have sought in vain. The window was open; and a telescope stood on a little round table by it, and pointed to Bressuire. Duchenier looked through it, and had the satisfaction of perceiving that the white flag floated serenely on the top of the spire, and gave token that all was safe and secure.

The door opened, and Marie de Beaurepaire entered, and the next moment was in the arms of Duchenier. "Dear, dear Marie," he said, "this is one of those bright spots in a cloud that we can never expect till it really comes. I had nearly astonished the council by the extravagance of my joy when I was requested to assist M. de Lescure in raising Cerisay and the other villages. But you had my letter?"

"Yes, Charles, I had it yesterday evening; and that telescope, could it tell tales, would let you know what I was doing at the time."

"Would it say that Marie was thinking of Bressuire and those who were in it? I think it would. Well, dearest, we were there till midnight, for recruits poured in very fast, else I had hopes of almost anticipating my letter, or, at least, sleeping here last night."

"Then have you been riding all night, Charles? Had I known it, I would have been in the village to meet you. You know we Vendeans are not like the rest of France: we are not ashamed of saying what we think, and where we feel love, shewing it. But who is your companion? I had but one glimpse of him as you rode up the avenue."

"You have heard of him, Marie, though you have never

seen him. It is M. de Lescure. If he lives, he will be the heart and soul of the movement. So he is now, round his own chateau at Clisson. They call him the Saint of Poitou; and he deserves the name."

"Oh, yes, I have heard of him," said Marie de Beaurepaire; "we are not so far from his side of the country but that our peasants have many a tale of his goodness, and of Madame de Lescure's too, and her kindness I have myself seen. But now, Charles, how long do you stay? and what have you been doing in the village? I heard there are many who wish to join you—only my father is slow in declaring himself."

"We have eighty-five names down for the army, Marie; and that drafts off almost more than you ought to spare. They march at six to-morrow morning; and I go with them. But M. de Lescure is obliged to leave almost at once; and he is very desirous of seeing you."

"For your sake, I suppose; for I know that my father was not acquainted with him. Well, I will go down."

"Not yet, not just yet, dear Marie. I have so much to say to you."

CHAPTER II.

At some little distance from the chateau of Cerisay, and on the limits of its immediate grounds to the south, there was a small shrubbery of fir, larch, and such-like trees, intermingled here and there with an ash or a birch. At the further side a kind of terrace had been raised, sheltered by the shrubbery on the north, and divided by a low hedge from the fields and pastures to the south. It was a pleasant place in the long summer evenings, when the declining sun shaped out fairy figures of gold in the decaying leaves of many a past year that strewed the ground beneath their parent trees, when the lark was rising for the last time into the calm air, and the peasant whistling his last tune as he trudged homewards; when the dove cooed softly from the neighbouring clump of elms, and the unwearied grasshopper shrilled out his vesper hymn.

On this terrace Charles Duchenier and Marie de Beaurepaire were walking, about seven o'clock in the evening of the day the events of which we have partly described. M. de Lescure had waited till the arrival of Father Laval, had concerted with him a few necessary arrangements, and had then taken his departure towards Chatillon; and, as it appeared from the accounts of the *épicier* of M. de Beaurepaire, who had accidentally come over from that place, the levy had been as successful in Chatillon as it had been at Cerisay. The preparations in the village had gone rapidly forward; Charles Duchenier and the priest had personally superintended a large proportion of them; bread had been baked; scythes, pitchforks, bills, hatchets, and one or two old boar-spears, called into requisition; and many a heart among the young peasantry of the village beat high for the morrow.

Up and down the terrace, then, the two lovers were walk-

ing; and their talk was more cheerful than the danger of the times might seem to have suggested. But they both had a firm confidence in their cause, and a firmer in the GOD of their cause; and though they spoke of melancholy things sometimes, they never spoke in a melancholy manner.

"No, Charles," said Marie de Beaurepaire, withdrawing her arm from his, and clasping her hands together; "you know me well enough to be sure that, if you fall in this war, my earthly happiness goes to the grave with you. To be another's after I have been yours, is an impossibility. Time was, that my course in such a case would have been easy. Hundreds of convents would willingly have received me. Now they have taken away that resource from us poor women; but I would lay myself out as a sister of charity, to wait on those that should suffer in the same holy cause in which you are engaging."

"Nay, dearest," said Duchenier, repossessing himself of the hand that had been withdrawn from him, "we will hope better things than this. I confess it, I was selfish enough to wish it, I was selfish enough to mention it to your father, that you might be really my own before I cast in my lot with the insurgents. But he judged for the best; and he gave me hopes that, if the war promises to last, and has any chance of terminating successfully, he would not withhold his consent from our marriage as soon as he had placed that part of his fortune in security which, if he gave his daughter to a brigand, would be confiscated by government at once."

"Get but his consent, and you shall have mine cheerfully," answered Marie. "Think what a sad parting it must be for many and many a son, and brother, and lover, in our little village this evening: some of them never can return again! Well—

"Le douleur est à nous, et la gloire est à lui."

"True, it is so; and it will one day be requited to them. But they have no such thoughts, depend upon it: they are anticipating the future, and the happiness and glory of their return. You have heard the three demands our Vendeans mean to make on government, if we are successful?"

"No, never," said Marie.

"Why, they are not very presumptuous. The first is, that there may be a province of La Vendée, formed out of the Vendean parts of Bretagne, Anjou, and Poitou. The second, that the king would condescend once to visit La Vendée; and the third, that there may be a Vendean troop in the life-guard, and that the white flag may float for ever over each parish church in the province."

"What peasantry but our own," returned Marie, "would think of such conditions? May we not well be proud of them? Well as I love you, Charles, it would have been a hard pang to have been asked to follow you into another province."

"I love them as dearly as you can do, Marie; and I am as proud of being a Vendean as that villain Robespierre is always telling his dupes that he is of being a Frenchman. It runs in the race, that provincial patriotism, I think. It is a thousand pities to have the people divided as they are territorially."

"But talk to me of yourself, Charles,—tell me what you think of this attack on Thouars. Oh, how my thoughts and prayers will be with you to-morrow night, and on that fearful next morning!"

"I know they will, dearest one,—I am sure they will. But I have no fears for the issue. We have every thing on our side: the peasantry flushed with success—the officers in the most perfect union—our numbers vastly superior to that of the enemy. Hark! what was that?"

"What?" said Marie, looking round. "I heard nothing."

"It is very strange," said Charles, "but I could have sworn that I heard a drum towards the south,—there, towards Moncontour. It could not have been so, for this is the last parish summoned to the southward."

"You did not think, you could not think, it was the National Guards?" asked Marie, turning very pale, and clinging to Duchenier.

"I should not have known what to think," replied he, "had it been so. Hark! it *is* there; I caught it clearly then.

Perhaps the peasants at Moncontour have risen. Monsieur's chamber commands that road. Come in, Marie. If it be so, I must go and welcome them; if not"——

"If not—" repeated Marie, anxiously.

"We must get the recruits up from the village instantly. There is no time to be lost." And Duchenier hurried forward, half leading, half supporting Marie de Beaurepaire. They entered the room which he had mentioned, and he gazed anxiously from the window.

"I can see something," he said, "down by the rock we used to call Le Nez Blanc. Run for your father, dear Marie; I will go for the telescope."

Duchenier returned before M. de Beaurepaire and his daughter reappeared. When they entered the room, his eye was at the glass.

"Do not be frightened, Marie," he said, "we shall come safely through this. M. de Beaurepaire, you know best what grounds government have to suspect you. There is a body of infantry on the Moncontour road, and they seem in haste. Will you order horses to be saddled, and take care of your daughter; or take your stand here?"

"That depends—" said the old gentleman, coolly. "Let me see the glass. How many do you make them out?"

"About a hundred and fifty."

"So do I. We will beat them off, if they are going to arrest us. Who shall rouse the village?"

"I will!" said Duchenier. "Send a servant to Bressuire with a letter: we can hold the house till help arrives, if the worst comes to the worst. I will be back again, dearest, long before they are here." So saying, he hurried to the stables, saddled his own horse before the groom could offer his assistance, and galloped into the village.

"Ring the bell, Marie," said her father. The servant appeared. "Pierre, saddle the best horse in the stable, and ride full speed to Bressuire with a letter I will give you as soon as you are ready. Now, bring me the desk from my dressing-room, Marie."

"Here are pens, and ink, and paper, father," she said, fetching them hurriedly from a side table. "Write! O pray write!"

"I cannot write off my own desk, child," replied M. de Beaurepaire. "These things should always be done with coolness."

Marie returned with the desk. Her father drew a snuff-box from his pocket, opened it, took a pinch of snuff, closed it, returned it to its usual receptacle, chose one out of two or three pens, mended it, nibbed it, examined the nib with great deliberation, stretched a sheet of paper before him, and wrote as follows:

"M. le Commandant du Dépôt de l'Armée Catholique,

"A body of from one hundred and fifty to two hundred men is at this moment on its way from Moncontour to Cerisay. As I have reason to believe that I am an object of suspicion with government, it is probable that my own arrest, and that of my family, may be the design of this movement. I purpose holding out this chateau, with the assistance of the enlisted peasantry of Cerisay, who number about eighty. I have also the advantage of the advice and aid of my friend, M. Duchenier. If you can spare me any of the troops under your command, I doubt not that we shall be able to drive back the intruders. Your own experience will convince you, that this is of as much importance to your own plans as to the safety of my property. I embrace this opportunity of assuring you of my high consideration; and have the honour to remain, M. le Commandant, your obedient humble servant,

"CLAUDE DE BEAUREPAIRE.

"Chateau de Cerisay, May 3, 1793."

The letter was scarcely written and the servant despatched, when Duchenier burst in: "They will do their duty, M. de Beaurepaire; they are on fire to attack the Blues. Young or old, enlisted or unenlisted, they will be here in five minutes. You may reckon on at least a hundred. But now comes the question: if these troops have nothing to do with yourself, are you willing to let them pass?"

"I have told you," replied M. de Beaurepaire, "already, that my heart is with you, that I wish you success, that I feel for most of your grievances; yet I should be willing to

temporise a little longer, as I have frankly said before now, because a great part of my property hangs on the event. Were they willing to leave me alone, I would not attack them. But it is not so. I have committed myself more decidedly than I have owned to you—perhaps even more than I have owned to myself; and, worse than that, Duvernier, the notary at Parthenay, is aware of it; and I doubt not he has sold himself to the authorities. Nevertheless, the criterion is easy. If such a handful of men really intend to penetrate La Vendée, they will keep the straight road to Chatillon, and avoid both us and Cerisay; if not, they must turn up the hill at the Grange Neuve. We will place our men between there and the chateau. If they pass along the high road, let them; if they turn hither, we know how to meet them."

"Where will you place your daughter, M. de Beaurepaire? And the women of your household must be thought of. Which is the safest place?"

"Oh, let me be with you as long as I can!" said Marie de Beaurepaire to her father; "I shall be safer with you and with Charles than any where else. Let the servants hide in the old cellars; I am sure no one will dream of looking for an entrance there. The door is in the wainscot, and there is tapestry before it."

"You are right, Marie," said her father; "it is an excellent place; but you must go there too. We will make good the lane, if we can. If we are driven back upon the house, you shall be with us; but till then, in case of accident, you must go with the rest."

"Indeed, dearest, your father counsels well," said Charles Duchenier. "With GOD'S aid, they shall not come near the chateau; but you must take care of yourself,—for all our sakes you must. If we are hard pressed, you shall be near us."

"But is there nothing we can do—nothing in which we can help? It is such a comfort to assist in something, be it only a trifle."

"Shut and bar all the shutters," said M. de Beaurepaire; "unchain the dogs, and call them in; and then go down.

You shall tell the female servants what they have to do.—I think I hear our recruits, Charles.—One word more, Marie: if I fall in this affair, I leave you the affianced bride of M. Duchenier. You will be well-nigh portionless; but he is a man of honour, and will fulfill his engagement. I should wish my death to put no bar in the way of your marriage; and, leaving you so unprotected, I wish it to be solemnised as soon as may be."

Marie burst into tears.

"Nay, dear Marie," said Duchenier, "there is no occasion for this grief. The danger is a trifle; only your father, like a wise man, was resolved to be prepared for the worst. Half an hour hence, we shall be sitting down to supper. But pray, pray take care of yourself.—Your pardon, M. de Beaurepaire." And, folding Marie in his arms, he kissed her more than once or twice.

The shouts of the advancing recruits were plainly heard. Duchenier and M. de Beaurepaire went out, accompanied by the six or seven servants of the latter gentleman, each of whom was provided with fire-arms.

"*Mes amis,*" said he, "this may be a false alarm, and I hope it is. A body of the Blues is advancing from Moncontour hither. If they pass along the high road to Chatillon, well and good; no one shall hinder them. It is their business and not ours to take care of themselves further on. But if, at La Grange Neuve, they take the turning here, we will meet them on the hill. M. Duchenier will place you: you are to obey his orders."

M. de Beaurepaire's speech was received with acclamation. While the position of the Catholic troops is being taken, we must take the liberty of dwelling a little longer on the situation of the chateau.

We know well that the reader too frequently finds it tiresome to be requested to pause for a moment and impress on his mind a particular locality; but we know also how important it is that he should have a clear conception of the position of a struggle, if he would understand the struggle itself.

The road from Moncontour to the north divided itself at the Grange Neuve, about a quarter of a mile below the cha-

teau, into two. Of these, that which led to the right went straight to Chatillon, leaving the chateau some way, and the village of Cerisay still further, to its left. That which led to the left wound up a steep hill, passed the chateau gates, leaving them on its right, and went directly into Cerisay. Thus it was clear that if the republicans merely intended to penetrate La Vendée, they would keep the main road at the Grange Neuve; if they there turned to the left, and struck up the hill, it would be a plain sign that their visit was intended for the village or for the chateau.

Duchenier had but a very few moments to dispose his men. Hardly one of them had seen fire before: and he knew well that the Vendeans, with all their bravery, generally shewed some alarm at being first led into it. The hill up which the road passed was in some places deeply cut, and there were jutting sandrocks on each side, like the lanes in the northern parts of Sussex. Behind the trees that clustered on and down these, the six or seven men who possessed fire-arms were placed; half the rest were arranged about two-thirds of the way up the hill, and the remainder concealed in the copse which we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. M. de Beaurepaire took his station with those that were on the hill. "*Mes amis,*" he said, "you have but to obey your orders, and you will succeed. You have an excellent position, and we will make use of it. Only be firm a few moments, and the affair will be over." He spoke confidently, but in his own heart his hopes of success were more moderate. The arms of the peasantry were of so very inferior a description, that it was evident they could not stand for a moment hand to hand against trained nfantry. The only chance was, that the latter might be thrown into disorder by the first charge; if that failed to carry every thing before it, numbers and discipline must tell. Charles Duchenier stood at the top of the cutting, waiting to see which turn of the road the regiment would take.

He was not long left doubtful. The word was given, "To the left;" and the soldiers took the road to the chateau, and began to ascend the hill. But twenty of them, under the command of a cornet, were detached to the right, either to

secure the rest from a surprise in flank, or to cut off the possibility of escape from the chateau.

This completely altered the plans of Duchenier. Calling his men together, and pursuing the skulking system in which the Vendeans usually fight, from copse to copse, from shrubbery to shrubbery, from bush to bush, they glided onwards towards the chateau, and were formed in the best order they might be under its eastern side. There we must for a moment leave them.

The main body of soldiery continued to advance till within a hundred yards of M. de Beaurepaire's men. Then a halt was called, and an officer came forward singly. M. de Beaurepaire hastened to meet him.

"Ah, M. de Cailly," he said, raising his hat, "I am happy to see you looking so well. I did not exactly expect the honour of your company; but the visit of a friend can never be out of place."

"It would give me the greatest pleasure," replied the republican officer, "to meet M. de Beaurepaire on any other errand; but the business on which I come is as painful to myself, as it will be, I fear, unpleasant to you. I am grieved, deeply grieved, to be obliged to inform you, that I am ordered by Convention to arrest yourself, and some members of your household, whose names I hold in this paper. If you will allow me to present it to you, you will see that I am only doing my duty."

"It is quite unnecessary, monsieur," answered De Beaurepaire; "in the first place, because I would not dishonour you by seeming to distrust your word; in the next, because I have not the slightest intention of being arrested. I have a large body of tenantry, as you see, on the hill; and were I willing to submit to government, they, I am sure, would not allow me."

"M. de Beaurepaire," replied Cailly, "let me recommend you, as a friend, to surrender peaceably. It must come to that. You cannot hope to escape: your chateau is invested behind; we are more than sufficient to sweep away that handful of peasantry: you are only pulling destruction on your own head."

"We shall see, M. de Cailly, we shall see," said the other. "In the mean time, if you have no further commands for me, I will wish you a good morning."

"Well," said Cailly, "I have given you good advice: your rejection of it be on your own head." And both officers rode full speed to their own men.

Cailly, though not personally hitherto engaged in the Vendean war, knew much of the tactics of the peasantry. He therefore restrained his men, who were eager to advance, and awaited the onset of the insurgents. Scarcely had M. de Beaurepaire gained his own troop, when he gave the word, "Forward!" Without order, without plan, knowing nothing of what they were to meet, or how they were to act, the peasantry poured down the hill. The regulars reserved their fire till their opponents were within twenty yards of them, and then poured it in with the most fatal effect. The whole column seemed to stagger: the greater part of the foremost had fallen; some were endeavouring to rescue a wounded companion, some to extricate themselves from a scene where their own wounds rendered them incapable of giving assistance. At this moment the republican troops charged with fixed bayonets. The rout was complete. It was in vain that M. de Beaurepaire besought, conjured, threatened; in vain that he performed the most daring deeds, and cut down, with his own hand, two or three of the Blues. He was forced along with the fliers; and thought himself too happy in being able to rally them a second time by the castle-gates. The combat was renewed with greater fury than before, though on more unequal terms.

In the mean time, the detachment despatched to surround the chateau had found themselves opposed, under its very walls, by the superior numbers of Duchenier. The regular troops fired on the peasantry; the latter rushed forward, fell on the republicans, drove them from the garden, and cut almost all of them in pieces. Duchenier then led them to the right, in the hope of flanking De Cailly. But, in the mean time, the Vendeans had been driven from their second stand, along the avenue, and right under the portico. Here they turned for the third time; the steps were covered with the

dead and dying, and slippery with blood; and still M. de Beaurepaire infused courage into his men, and held out against hope.

Marie de Beaurepaire had been unable to think of her own safety. After seeing that the servants were concealed, as well as the time and circumstances allowed, she had stood at one of the upper windows, and witnessed the gallant manner in which Duchenier dispersed his assailants. But the firing and shouts soon drew her to the other side of the house; and there it was a very different scene which presented itself to her eyes. Her father and his division were driven up the avenue, fighting for every inch of ground, and losing it, till at length they took refuge in and round the porch, and seemed to acquire courage from despair. She hurried into the hall, unlocked and unbolted the door, leaving the chain up, and opened it, to make sure whom she was admitting. The event widely differed from her expectations. There were shouts of "The door is open!" from the peasants; a rush was made to enter; the door was forced back upon the chain, and Marie de Beaurepaire could not slip it from the holdfast. In vain she begged them to stand off; in vain her father assured them, that if they would keep but for one moment from the door, they would be in safety; still they pressed against it, pushing themselves, and impelled alike behind by friends and foes, till the staple seemed almost yielding with the impetus of so many agonising men. Already had one or two chance shots rattled in the hall; one had demolished the chandelier which hung from its centre; and one or two of the Vendeans, nearest the door, cried out, "Take care of yourself, mademoiselle, and leave us!" But Marie kept her place, hoping and praying that some chance would, for one moment, relieve the door, and enable her to loose the chain.

And now attempts were made to break open some of the lower shutters, when the arrival of Duchenier's troop altered the state of things. Hurrying along the avenue, they obliged M. de Cailly to form a double front, and oppose these new assailants. Thus the tide of battle swept for a moment from the door; the few remaining peasants of M. de Beaurepaire's troop, by a prodigious effort of strength, pushed back their

nearest opponents, at the same time shouting, "Now! now!" Marie de Beaurepaire shut the door, extracted the chain, and then flung it open. There was a violent struggle at the very threshold, the report of a pistol close outside, and then two gigantic republican soldiers burst into the hall, closed the door again, and bolted it. One of them seized Marie with the grasp of a vice; the other threw open one of the shutters, and a stream of republicans poured in. The chateau was taken.

"Charles," said M. de Beaurepaire, coming up to the side of M. Duchenier, who was endeavouring to rally his somewhat disordered men for another charge, "it is all over. My daughter is in their hands."

"Where, and how?" he asked.

"They have fought their way into the house. She attempted to open the door for us. They want me, and not her. I will offer myself, if they restore her."

"They will detain you both," said Charles. "Make one more effort with me. We were all but at the porch last time. My life is hers, more than my own. They shall not carry her off."

One last effort brought the Vendeans on to the very steps of the portico; and Charles and M. de Beaurepaire were fighting hand to hand with the republicans. But now the windows of the chateau were filled with musketeers; and a murderous volley was poured on the royalists. Weary, dispirited, thinned fearfully, they at length drew off; and, in spite of all the efforts of the two officers, retired to the village. Duchenier seemed bent on forcing his way in single-handed. M. Beaurepaire, with the greatest difficulty, led him off.

"Charles, Charles," he said, "this is pure madness. You cannot save my poor girl now. Her only hope is in our saving our lives for another time. We must follow our men. Consider; the royalists from Bressuire must soon be here. Then we may have a hope."

Duchenier yielded, and followed the poor remains of the Vendean recruits. It seemed that the republicans had no intention of attacking the village. It was now dusk; and it would appear, from the various lights that glanced through

the chateau, that all its principal rooms were tenanted; doubtless the victors were refreshing themselves after their fatigues.

It was a dreadful scene in Cerisay. There were but about thirty who had returned unhurt; and some ten more, wounded with greater or less severity. Wives, sisters, and daughters were running hither and thither in the wildest agitation; few knew positively, or could know positively, that those they loved had fallen; and yet that was a preferable fate than to be left on the field of battle hopelessly wounded, as many undoubtedly were. Add to this, the momentary expectation of troops from Bressuire; the fear of some attack from the republicans; the care that the wounded required; the one or two deaths that occurred amongst those who had just had strength to crawl back; and there was confusion and misery that would not soon be forgotten. M. de Beaurepaire retired to the priest's house, and busied himself in writing; his aim being, by the sacrifice of his property, to repossess himself of his daughter's person. Charles, though half distracted by his own loss, was busy in the village, comforting, to the best of his ability, the bereaved and wounded, and infusing courage into the unhurt. The priest went from cottage to cottage, congratulating or consoling, and proved himself, in every sense of the word, the true father of his parish.

When it drew towards ten o'clock, and still no tidings from Bressuire, he proposed to Charles, and to six or seven of the stoutest among the peasantry, to venture close to the chateau, and carry back such of the wounded as might still survive. The party was formed: silently and stealthily they wound along the route we have so often mentioned, and down the avenue. It was a warm, close, dark night; and, the clouds having gathered in at sunset, a mizzling rain had come on. More than once the foremost of the party stumbled over a corpse, but they could not discover any living person. Thus they approached quite close to the house, and were examining the steps of the portico, from which the dead had not been removed, when a sound was heard in the hall—the door opened—and a bright gleam of light shot forth into the dusky murkiness. At the same time, on the other side of

the chateau, there were the various sounds of marshalling a body of men; and presently the word, "Forward! quick march!" was heard in the clear tones of the sergeant. The reconnoitrers crouched down among the dead bodies, incurring no great danger, except the priest, whose habit would have been sufficiently visible had a strong gleam of light fallen upon them. The men marched down the avenue, six abreast, and halted at its lowest end. In the mean time, three or four horses were brought round to the front; and Duchenier perceived, with a heart ready to burst from indignation, that one of them had a lady's saddle.

"Lie still, my son, lie still!" whispered the priest, who was fortunately near him. "You have no right to throw away your life for absolutely nothing: what could you do against some twenty men? Still less have you a right to betray your companions, who will undoubtedly be discovered if you discover yourself."

"You are right, father, and I will be still," answered Charles Duchenier. "But you cannot judge what a terrible struggle it costs me."

"Trust also, that we may gain some information, if we can remain here unperceived. Hush! they are speaking now."

Voices seemed to approach the hall-door. "Are the horses ready, Bertier?" demanded M. Cailly.

"Yes, monsieur," replied the man addressed.

"Then, mademoiselle," said Cailly, looking back, "we must trouble you to mount. I am sure your good sense will see the propriety of complying where you cannot resist."

"Where are you going to take me?" inquired Marie de Beaurepaire, in a voice so tolerably firm, as to prove that she had no immediate apprehension.

Duchenier held his breath in the extreme eagerness of his silence.

"To Paris, mademoiselle; but as soon as you reach La Flêche, you shall be accommodated with female attendance. The Convention does not war with women."

"So it seems," was the only reply.

Charles touched the priest's side with his elbow, and was answered by a scarcely audible, "Thank God, my son!"

"Lecointel," said M. de Cailly, "are you sure that none of our wounded men are left here? There seems a prodigious number of corpses," he added, looking towards the spot where the Vendeans were lying hid. Duchenier and one or two of his companions almost involuntarily felt for their pistols.

"No, monsieur, there are none," replied Lecointel. "We looked carefully over the ground, and bestowed a bullet on one or two of the brigands, to put them out of their misery. All our wounded are safe in the chateau, we cannot care better for them; and when the rebels return to it, they will find them, and, to do them justice, I know they will treat them well."

In the mean time, Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire was mounted on the horse that had been provided for her; M. Cailly rode on her right side, the man called Lecointel at her left, two or three others immediately behind, and ten or twelve soldiers on foot brought up the rear. It appeared that they were resolved to avoid the village; for at the end of the avenue they turned to the left, rode down the hill, and again turning to the left, struck off on the high road.

As soon as they were fairly out of hearing, "Well, my son," said Father Laval, "did I not advise well? And have you not cause for thanking GOD that you have learnt the destination and the route of Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire?"

"Indeed you did," said Duchenier; "and indeed I have. But what is to be done?"

"My children," said the priest, "go, some of you, and find out where the wounded men are lodged. Now we have a glorious opportunity of shewing them how Catholics take revenge. Then come back to my house, and I will return here again; but, first, I must consult with M. de Beaurepaire."

Thus it was arranged. Three or four of the peasants entered the chateau; the rest, with Duchenier and the priest, hurried back into the village.

CHAPTER III.

We must shift the scene to a mean auberge on the southern side of the Thoué, and a little way higher up it than the town of Thouars: and we must allow nearly thirty-six hours to elapse. It was about three o'clock in the morning of the fifth of May.

In the common room of this auberge the chiefs of the insurrection were seated round a miserable table. Two rush-lights shed a melancholy light on the scene; the table was strewed with papers, plans, estimates, memoranda of the depth of the various fords, a rough sketch of the town of Thouars, a draught of the proposed scheme of crossing, and other documents of a similar kind.

At the head of the table sat M. de Bonchamp, the recognised head of the army, in the absence of M. de Boisy, who suffered from ill health. He was well versed in the art of war, having seen service in India; and was one of the few among the leaders who were so. Gentleness was the leading feature of his character: perhaps he was over-gentle, considering the character of the times, and the villany of the opponents against whom he acted. However, he was exceedingly beloved, and was just the man for the nominal position he held. He was willing to take advice from any one, extremely affable to the peasants, and courteous to his equals; and one of the most general favourites, without being so enthusiastically beloved as some of his brother officers, in the army.

Next to him was Cathelineau, the prime mover of the insurrection. He was a woolcomber at Du Pin, possessed of no military skill, of no very commanding talents, but so honoured for the saintliness of his life, that the peasantry regarded him with an enthusiasm approaching to veneration. Such a man,

they thought, must be protected by GOD, and Providence would supply the deficiencies of worldly skill. He was usually known as " the Saint of Anjou."

The personage who sat next was of a different character. M. d'Elbée was a small, busy, bustling man, always ready to give his opinion on every subject, and generally ready to give it well. He, too, had been in the army, but had seen little actual service. So far as all his worldly interests were concerned, he had gladly sacrificed them; but he was not entirely able to get rid of ambition. After all, it was ambition of a very harmless kind: he loved to have his name in all the manifestos or bulletins which the army published, and had an ardent desire to be generalissimo, just for the name of the thing. A more serious fault was his making use of religion as a means of acquiring popularity. He was a man of piety, and no one could doubt it, but he brought in religious references without sense or reverence; and, in particular, the word Providence was scarcely ever out of his mouth. The peasants, in the innocence of their hearts, and without intending any sneer, named him General *la Providence*. To add to his particularities, he was in the habit of preaching to the soldiers, though not making any pretence to eloquence. He had but one expression when leading on his troops: " My lads, Providence will give us the victory!"

M. de Marigny sat at the left hand of M. de Bonchamp. He had the command of the artillery, a service which he understood perfectly. He was of a most ardent temperament, continually involving himself in disputes, and sometimes seriously injuring his cause by them. But the great blot in his character was his implacability towards the prisoners; a fault in which he was countenanced by his next neighbour, Stofflet. The latter had been a gamekeeper, and had served as a private soldier. The soldiers obeyed him better than they obeyed any one else, but it was the obedience of fear, not of love. His measureless ambition subsequently inflicted the deepest injury on the army. At this stage of the war it was not manifested, though suspected. Next him sat M. Lescure; then M. de la Rochejacquelein. This young hero—for he was but twenty—*seemed a revival of the* character of the perfect knight, and

well merited his surname—*the Intrepid.* To the rest who were there present, M. de Donnissan, M. Dommaigné, and others, the course of our story will sufficiently introduce us.

But we must dwell a little longer on Charles Duchenier, who was hanging over the back of M. de Lescure's chair, with an ill-concealed expression of impatience. On his return to Cerisay with the priest, he communicated to M. de Beaurepaire what he had learned of the fate of his daughter; and the three held a hurried consultation as to the course that it would be most prudent to pursue. Duchenier avowed his determination of going to Paris; Father Laval represented to him the impossibility of effectually benefiting Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire by such a step; and her father joined in the advice of the priest. "The only way we can hope to rescue her," he said, "is by offering to surrender myself, and that I will do; the letters are already written. But, Charles, you must stay over the affair at Thouars. If we succeed—for I must now cast in my lot entirely with the insurgents—we shall be in a position to make better terms with government. The surrender of a victorious rebel will be purchased at a higher rate than that of a skulking fugitive. If you are determined to go, go: only wait over the day after to-morrow,—I might say, to-morrow, for it must be midnight."

"M. de Beaurepaire says well," said Father Laval: "you are bound, my son, to follow that advice. I wonder we have heard nothing from Bressuire. I must go down again to the chateau, and look after the wounded: several of the good wives of the village are there already. But I will see you in the morning."

Just as the worthy priest was leaving the house, a horseman galloped up the street from the chateau. It proved to be the servant despatched to Bressuire, with a letter from the officer in command of the royalists there. It contained many apologies for being unable to comply with the request of M. de Beaurepaire. There were not above fifty soldiers in the town; the fidelity of the inhabitants was not thoroughly secure; the country round was entirely unsettled; and to diminish his little garrison might lead to the most serious results. Pierre, it appears, had been compelled to choose the most cir-

cuitous and unfrequented paths, to escape from the regiment of M. de Cailly. He had at length made his way, with great caution, to the chateau, had there learnt that he was too late, and had thence ridden on to the village.

The next morning, Charles Duchenier, M. de Beaurepaire, and the remainder of the Cerisay recruits, marched at the appointed time; and, after a gloomy and fatiguing day, had arrived at the rendezvous about nightfall. Both gentlemen went instantly to M. de Lescure, whom they found in the auberge which we have just mentioned, and acquainted him with the circumstances in which they stood; and he much commended the manner in which Duchenier had consented to be present at the attack on Thouars. "If you will go to Paris afterwards," said he, "GOD preserve you, and give you success. I will not try to dissuade you; though I fear, I fear, you have not the shadow of a chance of gaining your object. But now, after you have refreshed yourselves, you had better try to take some rest. You will find, or make some corner in which you can sleep. The attack is fixed for five in the morning; the council meets at three; and you are to be then sworn in of it, Charles. We meet in this room, for lack of a better."

We may now return to the scene with which we opened this chapter.

"It seems, then, messieurs," said M. de Bonchamp, "that we are resolved to distract Quetineau by an attack in four places. I am of the same opinion myself, and shall hardly need to put it to the vote. All those who are in favour of this scheme, hold up their right hands. We are unanimous, messieurs, and I am very glad of it, for the point is one of great importance. We have now to arrange who shall command each division. Do me the favour to hand me that chart which is by you, M. Stofflet. It contains as correct a plan of the river and the bridges as could at the instant be obtained."

"May I inquire to whom we are indebted for it?" inquired M. de Donnissan.

"Partly, I believe, to M. de Marigny," replied Bonchamp, "and partly to the parish priest of Ligron, yonder."

"Who deserves much more praise than I do," said Ma-

rigny, "for he has had some practice in the art of surveying."

"Well, here is the chart," proceeded the president. "The first position to be occupied is the bridge of S. Jean, just opposite the town. M. Stofflet has reconnoitred it."

"I have," said the gamekeeper, "as well as I could. Quetineau has thrown up a breastwork of timber at the further end; and I guess he has a masked battery to the right on the further side. Any how, he commands the bridge with his field-pieces, and his grape-shot will do fearful execution. I doubt if the bridge is passable."

"We had better distract his attention," remarked D'Elbée. "If we make a good feint further up, we shall bring the old general down there. What is the highest of the points of attack called?"

"The Gué aux Riches," answered Bonchamp.

"What sort of ford?" asked M. de Lescure.

"Perhaps four feet deep where deepest," replied the other.

"You know it yourself, M. de Bonchamp?" inquired D'Elbée.

"I know it well."

"Then, gentlemen," proceeded D'Elbée, "I propose that M. de Bonchamp be requested to take the command in that post."

"I beg leave to second the motion," said Cathelineau.

"I am very willing to do so," replied Bonchamp, "if the Council wishes it. The next place is a bridge, of which I cannot learn the name; but, however, it is close to Vrine, and is of great importance. It is the most undefended, naturally, of all the points of assault; and it seemed to me, as well as the mist let me see last night, that they have concentrated their best men there, and that the attack will be sufficiently dangerous."

"Let me be there," said M. de la Rochejacquelein.

"Not by yourself, Henri," said Bonchamp, "if the Council follows my advice. You can take care of others, but are not fit to be trusted with yourself."

"I will be with him," said Cathelineau and De Lescure at

once. The former instantly apologised, and proposed the latter.

"Well," said De Lescure, "will you give me Duchenier also?"

"Nothing can be better," said D'Elbée.

"M. d'Elbée," continued the president, "I think that if you, with M. Cathelineau and M. Stofflet, would take the Pont du Bac du Chateau (which, after all, I suspect will be the turning point), we shall be admirably provided on that side."

"And, perhaps," said Lescure, "M. de Marigny will be at the Pont S. Jean. The artillery service almost wholly lies there."

"Will M. de Donnissan accompany me?" he inquired.

"Willingly," said the brave old courtier; and thus the matter was settled.

"It is getting light," remarked De Bonchamp; "and we have still somewhat to settle. Henri, do me the favour to see if there are any provisions in the house. We must breakfast before we can fight, messieurs. I think that M. de Lescure and myself had better commence the attack simultaneously. Two hours after, the Pont de S. Jean, I should say; and then, half an hour later, the Pont du Bac."

"Excellent, monsieur, excellent," cried D'Elbée. "And the sooner the better."

"At five o'clock we may do it," said Lescure; "and by twelve we may be in Thouars."

"Oh, how stiflingly hot and dark is this room!" cried De la Rochejacquelein, re-entering it. "It is a glorious morning. Do let me open the shutters. Honest Jeannette has been up and stirring this hour. Breakfast will be served immediately. —M. Duchenier, I hear that M. de Beaurepaire has been inquiring for you."

"Will the Council excuse me for a few moments?" inquired Charles; and he left the room.

"Do you hear, De la Rochejacquelein?" said Lescure; "we begin cannonading at five o'clock. I hope our men have been taking care of themselves."

"That they have—that they have," replied the other.

And as he spoke, Jeannette, the aubergiste's wife, entered with a tablecloth, a great brown loaf, and a stew, which gave very satisfactory evidence of its savoury character. Her bright red gown, neat white apron, slim shoes, and high cap, were as coquettishly arranged as if she had been going to a rustic merry-making, instead of to a council of war.

"Good morning, messieurs," she said; "I thought that you would not leave the *Moulin* fasting. I hope you will find the stew good.—Plates, Annette, as quickly as you can.—There is a letter for you, monsieur," she added, handing one to M. de Lescure, "just arrived by a Bressuire man."

"Thank GOD for that," he said, when he had read it; "it was to announce the safe arrival of my wife at Bressuire. I congratulate you, M. Donnissan."

"We share your joy, monsieur," said De Bonchamp; "it reminds us how much more France owes to such men as yourself and"—he added, after a momentary pause—"M. Cathelineau, than to us, who have no such treasure to lose."

By this time a very respectable breakfast was laid out, and, to say truth, the Council did ample justice to it. Jeannette stood by with many a simper, and many a hope that the gentlemen found their meal to their taste, and many an apology for having nothing but *vin ordinaire* to set before them. With that beverage, however, all seemed fully content, except Stofflet, who called for brandy, and Cathelineau, who drank nothing but water. In the mean time arrangements went on with undiminished eagerness.

"The signal, M. de Lescure, shall be two cannons from your column," said Bonchamp; "and every one understands that the other attack is to commence precisely two hours after that."

"It is clearly understood," replied D'Elbée.—"Allow me to help you to some more of this stew, M. Cathelineau; you will find it excellent.—Well, gentlemen, where shall we breakfast next?"

"In Thouars, no doubt," said De la Rochejacquelein.—"Here, Duchenier," he cried, as the latter entered the room, "there is no time to be lost; M. de Lescure and I are impatient to be moving."

Charles had been listening to the hopes and fears of M. de Beaurepaire. That gentleman, who had a very considerable idea of attending to his own comfort wherever he went, had appropriated to himself the best bedroom in the auberge; and, to do it justice, it was a very good one. "Pierre," he had said the evening before, "there is less covering on the bed than I am used to, and the nights are getting cold; and one ought to take care of one's health; and I don't think these young fellows much mind where they sleep; and I will thank you, therefore, to fetch me two blankets from the next bedroom." With the aid of this addition to his comforts, M. de Beaurepaire had passed a sufficiently good night; and his attentive valet had merited his warmest praises by bringing him a cup of chocolate, as much as he had displeased Jeannette by refusing to allow her to assist in making that beverage, in which, as he pertinaciously declared, no one knew his master's taste but he. Notwithstanding, however, these peculiarities, his advice to Charles proved his good sense; he entered with the coolest nonchalance into the preparations for action.

"Council over?" he inquired, when Duchenier entered the room.

"They have decided on the plan of attack; one or two details remain to be discussed."

"How is it, then?" And Duchenier satisfied him on that point.

"D'Elbée is the last in action?" he asked.

"He is."

"Let me see: five o'clock they begin the cannonade at the Pont de Vrine—that will be half-past; two hours and a half after, D'Elbée's time comes on—that will be three hours—half-past eight, say nine:—well, give my compliments to M. d'Elbée, and tell him that I shall do myself the honour of joining his column a little before nine. And now, Charles, to speak of my poor girl: are you determined to try for Paris?"

"Absolutely, monsieur."

"I had thought much of accompanying you last night; but I firmly believe the object will be better attained by keeping with the royalists myself. If I thought otherwise, nei-

ther the danger nor—what is of far more consequence—the trouble, should have kept me here. It is almost an impossibility that you should hope to see her; but one never knows how these things may turn out. If you should be the means of rescuing her, or if she should be fortunate enough to make her escape, and you should fall in with her, I charge you, as you love her, to marry her as soon as an *insermenté* priest can be found. Tell her what I said; and desire her, on pain of my displeasure, to obey me."

"I did not need this, monsieur, to make me willing to do and suffer every thing for her. But I shall see you again before I set forward?"

"I trust so. Keep close to M. Lescure, and I shall find you more easily, if we gain Thouars; and if not, I would not have you lose time for the chance of meeting me."

"Farewell, then, M. de Beaurepaire; I will trust that GOD will bring us together again; and rest assured, all that man can do for poor Marie will be done."

"I do, my good friend, I do. Adieu, Charles; take care of yourself."

Duchenier went down stairs; M. de Beaurepaire composed himself to sleep, having first desired Pierre to wake him at eight o'clock, and to remain within call. Since in this case, as in so many, the most important result did not arise from the source that seemed most important, we must take the liberty of waiting with M. de Beaurepaire, rather than going forth with the royalist army.

That gentleman slept soundly for some time. At last he began to dream that he was going out in his heavy, lumbering, but most gorgeous carriage, to pay a visit. He thought that the roads were very bad; that his fine sleek black horses struggled and strained to get the vehicle along; that first one wheel, then another, and then another, rattled over a prodigious stone. Then he fancied himself upset, and the door fastened, so that he could not get out; then he thought that the servants were endeavouring to beat it open with sledge-hammers, which made such an extremity of noise, that the dreamer woke. He woke, and the same sound continued: there was a heavy cannonade in the direction of Vrine and

the Gué aux Riches. He rang the little bell which stood by his bedside, and Pierre appeared.

"What is it o'clock, Pierre?"

"Nine, monsieur."

"Why, how is that? I desired you to call me at eight."

"Yes, monsieur; but I knew that you only wanted to be in time for M. d'Elbée's division; and there has been some hindrance."

"I will get up, however. That cannonade is from M. de Lescure's column, I suppose?"

"Yes, monsieur; it has been pretty sharp for some little time."

"Any news from there?"

"As far as I can learn, monsieur, they keep it up on both sides with a great deal of spirit, but no great advantage either way."

"Is M. d'Elbée in the house?"

"No, monsieur; he is superintending the moving of some cannon."

"Bid some one saddle me my horse, then." And the servant went to do it.

M. de Beaurepaire made—not a hurried toilette, for that had he been going to the guillotine he would not have been guilty of—but, for him, a quick one; took a few hasty mouthfuls—("If I live," said he, "I shall get somewhat better bread than this detestable *pain bis* before night; and if I am to fall, it is not worth while eating this")—and rode out to the spot where he had been directed to M. d'Elbée. He found that officer in the most violent state of excitement: more than two hours had elapsed since the time that had been agreed on for the commencement of his attack, and he had not yet been able to get his guns to the proper position. Five or six teams of oxen were even now labouring at the last detachment; and D'Elbée was directing, encouraging, vociferating, and gesticulating with tenfold his usual energy.

Stofflet was superintending the arrangement of the field-pieces; and Cathelineau, whose active calmness presented a strange contrast to the agitation of his fellow-officers, was urging on the last field-piece and the weary beasts of burden.

"Glad to see you, glad to see you, M. de Beaurepaire. This is sad work, sad work indeed. Two messages I have had from De Lescure, praying me to get into action; his powder cannot hold out much longer: and these infamous roads still keep us back. Ha! they are keeping it up to the purpose," he continued, as another furious cannonade commenced. "The feint will become the real attack, I fear."

"You have better ground now, monsieur," said Beaurepaire; "I will ride on, with your good leave, and look at your position."

He did so: and it was a beautiful scene. A lovely day, with a pleasant northerly breeze; scarcely a cloud except two, that were snow-white as two straying lambs. A steep bank sloped abruptly down to the Thoué; here and there an old oak or sapling birch shaded the sides of the slope; at its foot the river rolled swiftly on in that kind of dark brightness that the ruffling breeze imparts to water. Immediately in front, the town of Thouars rose on its steep hill, crested gloriously by its grey old castle; the houses and churches clustered up to and around it in black broken masses; and from the highest pinnacle of the keep floated the tri-coloured banner. The river, by a bold sweep, almost encircled the town. Far to the right a heavy drifting fog of smoke told the violence of the prolonged cannonade; the bridge, immediately at the foot of the eminence whereon M. Beaurepaire stood, was alive with its republican defenders; and a small park of artillery stood ready to play upon it, in case any attempt were made to force it. To this bridge a zigzag road swept down, without hedge, bush, or tree at its side, and fearfully exposed to the fire of the enemy, when the Vendean troops should be called to defend it.

Stofflet had disposed his guns on a small piece of tableland at the top of the zigzag. The gunners and mates were at their posts: all was ready, but for the arrival of the artillery that D'Elbée was bringing up, and for his approval of the arrangements. At this instant a messenger rode up to Stofflet.

"Monsieur," he said, "we have not charge for above six rounds more: M. de Lescure bids me to say that if any longer delay takes place, he must evacuate his position."

"You shall judge for yourself," said Stofflet And he gave the word to the gunners.

The roar of twenty pieces of artillery rent and shivered the calm spring air. When the white cloud had a little dispersed, Stofflet's keen eye discerned that there was considerable confusion on the bridge. The gunners were reloading and repointing; the infantry drawn back a little, so as to be clear of the enemy's fire, when it should come; and Stofflet had just said, "We shall drive them out, monsieur," when twelve long tongues of fire shot out from the opposite bank. Another moment, and a large oak to the right of Beaurepaire was shivered to atoms, branches, boughs, and leaves whirling hither and thither, as if rent by a sirocco: the earth was ploughed up in all directions; dust, stones, and clods flew like chaff from a winnowing machine; and three artillerymen, standing by Stofflet, were cut asunder by one ball, covering him and Lescure's messenger with their blood.

"We have done them more harm than that, M. d'Elbée," said Stofflet, as the latter officer rode up. "Hands here! hands here! There is their place!"—pointing to the newly-arrived cannon, and a vacant space that was left for them.

"Well done, M. Stofflet, well done indeed," said D'Elbée, rubbing his hands. "Move this body away, some one;" for one of the corpses of the artillerymen was beating the ground convulsively with its feet. "Now, my lads, take good aim, and Providence will give us revenge. All ready!—then—Fire!"

It appeared, as soon as the opposite shore became visible again, that some person of eminence had been wounded, as six or seven soldiers were seen bearing a leader off. "Let us make sure of him," said Stofflet, superintending the pointing of a gun.

"No, no, Stofflet," said Cathelineau, who at that moment came up, "no, we do not war with the wounded. Give them another round before they can fire, my lads."

But it could not be done. Pierre, M. de Beaurepaire's servant, had, very unwillingly, followed his master to the field: and did so rather because he thought there was less *danger in going* than staying. At the first fire he had thrown

himself on the ground; but had found curiosity stronger even than fear, and was standing by De Beaurepaire's horse. Again the tongues of fire shot out; and almost simultaneously a long, loud, whistling noise ensued. Pierre, his master, and Stofflet spoke in the same moment.

"Oh, oh, gracious Heaven!" cried Pierre.

"Canister-shot," observed Stofflet.

"Down, my lads!" shouted De Beaurepaire.

Cathelineau said nothing, but crossed himself; as, it may be observed, most of the artillerymen did before firing.

This second round did infinitely more execution. Stofflet himself was slightly wounded by a splinter from an old post that stood near; six or seven Vendeans were killed, or mortally wounded, and several others injured, more or less. It appeared, however, that the cannonading at the Gué aux Riches and the Pont de Vrine grew less. At this moment, De Donnissan and De Marigny, who had been prevented, like D'Elbée, from commencing their attack at the time fixed, opened their fire.

De Beaurepaire was observing the movements at the other side of the bridge, when a boy from the auberge where he had slept came running up to him with a note, in the address of which he recognised his daughter's hand. It contained these words: "They will stop one whole day at La Flêche, at the *Sol Rayonnant*."

"Who brought this, boy?" inquired De Beaurepaire.

"A man from Cerisay," said the boy. "It was left at the priest's house, he said; but he did not hear who left it there."

"Monsieur d'Elbée, I have business of a very important character with De Lescure's division. Will you excuse me?" And leaving Pierre to shift for himself, he galloped along the high bank of the river. It was plain that the enemy considered him to be charged with a message of importance, for once a cannon-ball ploughed up the earth about twenty yards before his horse's head, and one shivered a stone-wall about as much behind him.

The village of Vrine lay on the low ground, close to the river. Down the hill rode De Beaurepaire, at a speed which equally endangered his horse and himself. Dashing through

the village, which was deserted, he found himself in the detachment he sought, and was directed to M. de Lescure. Here a very different scene presented itself from that on the heights. The two parks of cannon were much nearer, and the ground that intervened between them perfectly flat. The grass around the cannons was strewed with dead—sometimes lying singly, sometimes in heaps; the ruts of the road were full of blood; the air was oppressive and sulphurous; men and officers looked flushed and intensely excited.

"M. de Lescure," said De Beaurepaire, touching him on the shoulder as he leant over a field-piece, "where is Duchenier?"

"Gone with De la Rochejacquelein to seek powder," said Lescure briefly, his whole soul concentrated on the business in hand.

"Where shall I be likely to find him?" persisted De Beaurepaire, intent on his own overwhelming interests, and not seeing that De Lescure was watching, with every nerve strained to the utmost, an ill-defined and doubtful motion among the republican troops.

"I have tidings of my daughter," urged the agitated father, receiving no answer to his question.

"*Mes amis, les voilà qui s'enfuient!*" shouted De Lescure. "*Suivez-moi!*" And he rushed forward, fully expecting that the peasantry would follow him, and made his way alone on to the bridge. A furious fire of cannon and musketry poured in upon him; his clothes were cut into shreds; but he himself stood unhurt on the bridge, beckoning to his troops. At any other time De Beaurepaire would undoubtedly have hurried forward to his support, though it had been to certain death; but now he was absorbed in his own concerns, and anxious for nothing except to find Duchenier. A kind of motion passed along the front line, as if it were about to charge; but irresolution prevailed. M. de Lescure, after remaining for about a minute and a half on the bridge, returned leisurely.

"My friends," said he, somewhat reproachfully, "is this the support you give your generals?"

As he spoke, Duchenier and De la Rochejacquelein galloped up. "Follow us now! follow us now!" shouted the

latter; and all three, followed by one soldier, threw themselves on the bridge.

"Charles! Charles! Duchenier!" cried M. de Beaurepaire; "one moment! stop! pray stop!" But Duchenier only waved his hand, and rode on.

De Beaurepaire was reduced to desperation. "My friends," he cried, "for shame's sake follow them!" And he, too, rode on.

"Aim at the red handkerchief! aim at the red handkerchief!" burst from the Blues. De la Rochejacquelein always carried four pistols attached to him by a handkerchief of that colour; and to preserve him, by sharing his danger, most of the other officers adopted the same uniform, and partly from this cause acquired the name of Brigands.

There was a rush forward. They fell fast and thick; but the barrier was at length reached. It was formed of a dungheap, and a waggon overturned at the top of it. This waggon was crowded with republicans—the passage being defended by the battalions of the Nièvre and the Var. They pushed the royalists down with their lances—they leant their pieces on the spokes of the wheels, and fired with murderous precision. Duchenier was among the foremost. A republican presented his piece at him, touching his forehead with the muzzle—his finger was on the trigger; De Beaurepaire saw his danger, but could not aid him; when Texier, the peasant whom we have before mentioned, struck up the gun with his oaken stick, the only weapon he had; it exploded into the air, six inches above Duchenier's head. Texier caught hold of the wheels of the waggon, and grappled with the soldier whose aim he had foiled. With his right hand the brave peasant grasped the felloe, with his left he embraced his opponent, drew him by a prodigious effort of strength over the wheel, and threw him on the ground behind, where he was trampled on, and his brains beaten out. De la Rochejacquelein, De Lescure, and Duchenier, fired together—one between the arm and side, the others between the legs of Texier. Two or three of the battalion fell: there was a rush forward, and the four Vendeans made good their position on the further side of the wheel. The waggon lay bottom up-

wards, and a terrible struggle was kept up on it. Vendeans poured up on one side, republicans on the other, when Texier happened to look to the right. "*Mes amis!*" he shouted out, "M. de Bonchamp is crossing!" It was true. Taking advantage of the momentary panic, the foremost Vendeans pushed their opponents off the waggon by main force, and leaped after them. The peasantry poured over the barricade —the national troops began to retire—then to look behind them—then to turn—then to run. The Vendeans followed with loud shouts, and the bridge was forced.

"To Thouars! to Thouars!" shouted a hundred voices, as the column formed on the eastern shore of the Thoué. And the insurgents rushed forward so furiously, that the officers were obliged to canter in order to keep at their head. And now Cathelineau and D'Elbée were leading their division down the zigzag, the opposed artillery and the castle guns playing upon them. Marigny had already forced the passage of the Pont S. Jean, and De Bonchamp was hurrying on his forces to the walls. The slaughter of the republicans had been immense: the national guard of that section had defended the Gué aux Riches long and well, but had been cut to pieces to a man; and the flying remains of the battalions of Var and Nièvre were hurrying impetuously, each man with no other care than to avoid being the hindmost, into Thouars.

De Beaurepaire had kept in the front; and, indeed, had considerably distinguished himself in forcing the bridge. Finding himself again by the side of Duchenier, he informed him, in a few hurried words, that his daughter would be, or even then might be, in La Flêche. "Then there will I be too," said Duchenier, "ere many hours. Let us only take the town by assault, and the road will be open. The wall is not defensible. We must carry it somewhere."

In about twenty minutes the vanguard of the Vendeans was at Thouars. No attempt was made to preserve order or arrangement: every peasant attacked the walls in the manner that seemed to promise most success; some with pickaxes —some with spades—some endeavoured to loosen the old stones with their hands. M. de Lescure with his immediate staff rode round the wall, noting its weak points.

"Here," said he to Duchenier, "I think we may manage it. Get together twenty or thirty of the stoutest peasants; I will open the way for them. Meanwhile, Texier, let me mount your shoulders." And having done so, Lescure was easily able to place his hands on the parapet. Five or six of the national guard rushed towards him. He discharged first one pistol, then another, and brought down two of his opponents. His friends below fired on the remainder. Lescure, by a great effort, drew himself on to the wall, and gave his hand to Texier, who followed. One by one the Vendeans mounted, and presented a firm phalanx to their scattered assailants.

"On, on!" cried De la Rochejacquelein. "Let us take Quetineau alive; he will be a hostage worth his capture. Whatever happens, let none injure him!"

"The white flag is up on the town-house," said Lescure.

"That makes no difference," cried Marigny. "We were on the wall before they capitulated."

"We should be justified, I grant you, in sacking the place," answered Lescure; "but we are Catholics. For the sake of our cause and our GOD, let us give quarter."

"Surely," said De Donnissan. And Marigny found none to second him; for Stofflet, who undoubtedly would have taken his view of the case, had not yet come up. A deputation was formed for the purpose of treating with the general and the mayor. Lescure, De Donnissan, and De la Rochejacquelein proceeded to the residence of the latter. The gates were thrown open: the insurgents halted under arms in the Place Constitutionelle, on the ramparts, and outside the gate, and awaited the issue.

"Now, Charles," said De Beaurepaire, "we will furnish ourselves with good horses, and ride to La Flêche. We can take no force with us; it is out of the question: but we must trust to money and sleight of hand. I should like to take Texier with us, though: he is a perfect giant in strength, which is always useful, and he is as faithful as a hero of romance."

A noise at his side caused him to look round. Three or four peasants had seized a republican soldier, and evidently

shewed that they intended no gentle treatment of him. M. de Bonchamp was interfering.

"What is the matter, my friends?" asked Duchenier. "Remember, till the deputation returns, it is truce."

"Yes, monsieur; but this villain had cocked his pistol at M. de Bonchamp, and swore there should be one brigand less in Thouars. He shall hang for it, law or no law."

"He is my prisoner, however," said one of the peasants.

"He is not," said the other; "he is mine."

"You lie!" said the first speaker.

His comrade raised his hand to strike him.

"Comrade," cried De Donnissan, "JESUS CHRIST died for His enemies; and one soldier of the Catholic army would strike another?"

The men rushed to each other's arms.

"No, no, my good friends," remonstrated Bonchamp, "the man has done me no harm. Keep him a prisoner if you will; but we can afford to forgive to-day."

"That's true," cried one or two of the peasants. "Have him away to prison instead."

"Stay, my friends," said De Beaurepaire; "you may do me the most essential service if you give him into my hands. I am sure M. de Bonchamp will agree to the arrangement."

"Willingly," said the other.

The prisoner was accordingly handed over to Texier. "Bring him this way," said De Beaurepaire, who saw, from the man's demeanour, that he was a coward.

"Now, sirrah," he said, "I mean to use you this one day; and if you serve me well, I give you my honour that I will set you free at its end; if not, I will blow your brains out.—Texier, I want you to ride with me to La Flêche."

"To La Flêche, monsieur? If you desire it; but we cannot possibly escape, if we go half way thither even, from the Blues."

"We shall see. I will get you a good horse. Meanwhile take care of the prisoner, for I shall want him too; and take care of yourself, and get some refreshment. We can do nothing till the deputation returns; then I will make my arrangements. In the mean while keep by me."

"What do you mean to do?" inquired Duchenier.

"I will explain my plan when we are out of the town. Where are we to get horses? Mine is thoroughly knocked up."

"So is mine. We must exchange them as best we may. Here is Lescure."

The commission returned, and with them General Quetineau, a prisoner of war. He was a tall, thin man; but withal had a character of decision and honesty in his open forehead, sharply-cut nose, and compressed lips, that made him appear an adversary of a very different kind from the usual commanders employed by the Convention.

"The terms are agreed on," said De Lescure to De Bonchamp. "Allow me to introduce General Quetineau to you. We must all feel that, while we are to have enemies, the fewer that resemble him in talent, and the more in every other quality, the better for us."

Quetineau bowed. "It was, indeed," he said, "my wish to spare unnecessary bloodshed. Had I had a sufficient force at my command, I would have held out the place to the last, indefensible though it be; but I should have but lost some thousands of gallant men, who will do better service, I trust," —he smiled as he spoke,—"next time."

"I am sure," said De Bonchamp, "that I speak the sentiments of my friends as well as my own, when I say that you are at liberty to depart when and where you will; but I wish we could persuade you to stay with us on your parole. You know how Convention will treat you; you know how they have wreaked their pitiful vengeance on other brave officers for want of success, however little they were responsible for it. We offer you an asylum here, if you will give us your word of honour to consider yourself a prisoner of war. If you return, it needs no prophet to foresee that your fate will be the guillotine."

"I am much obliged, monsieur," returned Quetineau, "but my honour forbids me to accept your offer. I know that I incur considerable danger by returning to Paris; but my resolution is taken. If you set me free, I shall be obliged

by your kindness; if not, you must keep me a close prisoner, for I will not give my parole."

"I am sorry for your determination, M. le General; but undoubtedly you are free to act as you please. De Lescure, are those the terms you hold in your hand?"

"They are. Shall I read them?"

"If you will have the goodness."

De Lescure read:—"'*De par le Roi.* It is ordered by the Generals of the Royalist and Catholic army, that each soldier be furnished gratis with bread and wine by the inhabitants of Thouars; every other article to be paid for. And all disputes to be adjusted by M. de Donnissan on the one hand, and the Mayor of Thouars on the other. GOD save the King. Head-quarters, Thouars, May 5, 1793.'—I have had a hundred copies struck off, and have given directions that it should be posted in the streets."

The troops were now entering the town; the leaders of the insurrection agreed to meet at the mayor's house, and to establish their head-quarters there. M. de Beaurepaire called aside De Bonchamp, and gave him an account of what he had lost, what he had learnt, and what he intended to do. Then he and Duchenier rode to the mayor's house, to be present at another consultation, and to provide themselves with horses; and Texier and his prisoner, who was also placed under the guard of two other Vendeans, awaited them at a little auberge at the foot of the Castle Hill.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Marie de Beaurepaire was seized by the soldier of the National Guard, at the moment that the Chateau de Cerisay was gained, she knew enough of the ferocity of the republican troops to give herself up as devoted to instant death. But her name had been inserted in the warrant of arrest, and the soldier feared to deprive a mightier tyrant than himself of his prey. He therefore contented himself with tying her hands after no gentle sort; and thus detained her till—the royalists being obliged to draw off their forces—De Cailly was at liberty to inquire into the condition of the few prisoners he had made. He reproved the man for his barbarity, but in very measured terms; for the vengeance of a *concitoyen* might easily denounce him at the revolutionary tribunal; and then apologised to his captive for the harshness with which she had been treated. "I should not have thought," he said, "of detaining you, Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire, from the mere fact of your having been discovered in the house of a gentleman who had been unfortunate enough to fall under the suspicion of Convention, and who has now, I grieve to say, given so much countenance to those suspicions; but your name, I regret to inform you, occurs in my warrant, and we military men are as much subject to orders as the meanest soldier. In the mean time, all that can be done to render your situation easy, I hope you will reckon on my procuring you."

Marie's first thought was to establish some communication between herself and the female servants, who had sought refuge, as we have already said, in a part of the ancient portion of the house, known as the "Old Cellars." But these cellars opened from a pantry; and to request to be confined in that place would give rise to instant suspicion.

"I have nothing to ask, monsieur," she said at length,

"but that I may be confined in my own sitting-room, and may be left alone, unless you will allow some woman from the village, if such can be procured, to be my companion."

"Any room you choose shall be at your service," replied De Cailly, "if you will give me your word of honour not to attempt to escape."

"I shall give you no such promise," replied Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire; "but I give you my word that that room communicates with no other, nor could I make my escape from it but by the door or the window."

"That will do," replied De Cailly. "I will do myself the honour of conducting you thither." He did so; calling two soldiers to accompany him. One of them he placed at the door; the other he directed to take his place below the window. And having taken these precautions, he retired.

Marie's first impulse was to lock the door; her next, to throw herself into the chair whence so lately she had been watching the arrival of Charles Duchenier, and to burst into a flood of tears. Then her mind ran over the chances she might hope for of escape. If she were once committed to prison, her doom, she felt, was sealed: the daughter of any rebel, and still more of a Vendean insurgent, and most of all when that insurgent was a gentleman of rank, would, she knew, be but too acceptable an offering to republican revenge. Her only hope lay in making her escape while they were conveying her to prison. To outwit her escort would be as impossible as to resist them: her only hope lay in bribery. She remembered with joy that in that very room she possessed a hundred louis d'or; a gift from a distant relation on occasion of her approaching marriage with Duchenier. "And who knows," she thought, "but that the present intended but to adorn me for him, may, under GOD, save me for him?" Before possessing herself of this treasure, she knelt down and prayed for guidance and protection, and arose with a lighter heart. She hoped for some one of the peasant women, whose services she had requested De Cailly to procure, and he had promised to do it if possible: but as he intended that it should not be possible, her expectation was quite fruitless. The next difficulty was how to conceal the money. This she effected

by sewing it in various portions in her dress, trusting that no one would suspect her of such concealment; and knowing that the republican soldiers, however avaricious by nature, were too much in terror of their masters in Paris to display any great greediness after gain. She was interrupted in her task at about ten o'clock, by De Cailly, who came to announce that she must be prepared to set off that night, and to inquire if she would take any supper. At first she refused all refreshment; but then, resolving to be true to herself, accepted the offer. The officer brought her, arranged with as much neatness as the time would allow, stewed fowl, fruit, and wine; and was about to leave her, when she stopped him.

"M. de Cailly," she said, for she had learned his name when he entered the chateau, "you probably know what has become of my father. I ask you, if you do, to tell me; and, on the honour of a French gentleman, to tell me truly."

"On my honour, then," replied he, "the last time I saw him was when he rode after the retreating brigands; and, so far as I could judge, he had not suffered the slightest hurt. There has been scarcely any firing since: I should therefore judge that he is as safe as you could wish him to be."

"There was another gentleman who assisted him in defending his chateau. Have you any idea whether he received any injury?" She added, very unnecessarily, "One naturally takes an interest in every one who has perilled their lives in defending us."

"You mean M. Duchenier," returned Cailly. "We know him too well by reputation. I did not see him so late as M. de Beaurepaire, but when I did see him, he also was unhurt. And I have no reason for believing that he was subsequently wounded."

"Thank you, monsieur," said Marie. "I have nothing further to ask; except, indeed, whither I am to be conveyed."

"You shall know that when we march," said Cailly. "At present I am not at liberty to tell you."

"I shall require some articles of apparel, and a few other things: I suppose I may have leave to take them with me. If you will give me leave to collect them, I will consider myself on my parole for the next hour."

"Most willingly," said the other. "I will withdraw the soldier from your door."

Left to herself, Marie hastened to complete her task of concealment; swallowed as much as she could of her melancholy supper; and then made her preparations for the journey. She took the precaution of carrying a pencil and a few scraps of paper about her, not knowing what occasion or opportunity she might have for communication with any friendly person.

In less than the hour De Cailly returned, and, announcing to his prisoner that all was ready, led her down and mounted her, as we have related in the last chapter. She then learnt with a thrill of horror that her destination was Paris, and that she would travel by way of La Flêche. And at the same moment, as the reader remembers, her father and lover learnt it too.

The journey was long and melancholy. They had to accommodate their speed, till reaching Parthenay, to that of the infantry that escorted them. They rode in the middle of this body; De Cailly at the right, Le Cointel at the left hand of her horse. But at Parthenay, which they reached after midnight, the infantry was left behind, and a guard of ten dragoons enabled the party to proceed at a brisk trot; so that about two o'clock they found themselves in Mirebeau. But few words had been interchanged on the journey; and Marie almost spoke for the first time when she inquired the name of the place they were entering. De Cailly told her. "Here," he said, "we shall stop to-night: and you will find comfortable accommodation, I trust, at the mayor's house. To say the truth, he is my *quincaillier*, and an honest citizen. He will have given us up, I expect."

The old streets of Mirebeau rung out beneath the horse-hoofs of the advancing party. Dreamily did the quaint gables, with richly carved barge-boards, the curious pargetting, and cunning woodwork, gleam in the light of the waning moon. The word was given, "To the right!" and the dragoons presently drew up before an old-fashioned house which had endeavoured to assume something of a modern look. The lantern which projected over the door, and which was the only

one in the street that was not extinguished, shewed the inscription, *Le Grand, Quincaillier et Mercier;* and a solitary light in the parlour over the shop shewed that the worthy official had not yet retired to bed.

Citizen Le Grand was a man of more importance in his own eyes than in those of his country. Indeed, if he had not been, half, at least, of the *Moniteur* would have been occupied with his opinions and his actions. He was a little, round, busy, bustling personage, possessed with the idea that France was the finest country in the world, Poitou the most important province in France, Mirebeau the most influential city in Poitou, and he himself at the head of the political movements in Mirebeau. In principles he was a violent Girondist, and (hearing nothing whatever of the springs of government in Paris) he was at a loss to conceive how his own party could allow such license to Danton, Robespierre, and Marat. He scrupled not to call the latter personages by the title of infernal monsters; and was never weary of expressing his wonder that "Vergniaud, my own particular and most intimate friend,"—he had once waited on him with an address from Mirebeau,—"and Buzot, for whom I have the greatest esteem, and Louvet, should suffer themselves to be guided by such wretches. There is something at the bottom of this, neighbours," he had been saying that very afternoon in the café which he frequented—"There is something at the bottom of this, depend upon it, which every one does not understand." And he pursed his lips, shook his head, and looked wise. Poor man! There was something that every one did not understand, and, least of all, the mayor of Mirebeau,—as the sequel of this history will prove.

The mayor, as his visitors had suspected, was sitting up in the faint expectation that they might still arrive. But such protracted vigils had by no means improved his temper; and when he came down and opened the door, it was with an expression of countenance which augured ill for Marie's comfort during the time that she might be compelled to make his house her abode. However, like other men of a similar stamp, he was better at heart than in manner; as, truth to say, it was very desirable he should be.

"So, M. de Cailly," he began, "you are come at last! Better late than never, they say; on my word, I think 'Better never than late' in these cases. Here have I been sitting up for you by myself ever since the bell rang for nine o'clock. Sent Lisette to bed; would not keep up any one; no, says I, if any body must bear the burden of waiting for government prisoners, who so fit as the mayor? But where's De Beaurepaire? You haven't let him slip through your fingers, I hope?"

"Indeed, M. le Maire, I have been unfortunate enough so to do. This is his daughter. I told her that she might reckon on finding every accommodation she could require in your house."

The mayor was seized with a fit of republican virtue. "She must not expect such rooms as at Beaurepaire, General; but those days, thank GOD, are gone by for ever. A *De* has no great virtue in it now.—You must e'en be content, mademoiselle, with a bed in my daughter's room; for we have none other to spare. If your father had come, I must have lodged him in the prison; and, I can assure you, you may think yourself well off to have that."

"I will not intrude farther," said De Cailly. "We must be riding by eight o'clock to-morrow morning; for we must be at La Flèche that evening. I have to stay a day there for some other prisoners.—Good night, Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire.—Good night, monsieur. Remember," he added aside, "you must be answerable for the safety of your prisoner."

"Answerable, quotha!" grumbled the mayor, as he locked and bolted the door, while Marie was standing in the narrow passage that served as hall. "Answerable! I shall put a good lock outside your door, mademoiselle; and if you can break open that, they must answer it that brought you here. Follow me up stairs, and don't make a noise; I am sure there has been disturbance enough already. If you want that bundle, you had better carry it up yourself; we have no servants here."

Marie, without saying a word, took up the carpet-bag accordingly; and whether it were her beauty, or her evident

exhaustion, or her uncomplainingness, that touched the mayor's heart, he began to give signs of a little more humanity.

"Poor young woman!" he said; "after all, I had better take it up for you. Step into the counting-house a moment; you will not be the worse for a glass of wine." He accordingly fetched one, and a biscuit; and Marie received it with many expressions of gratitude for his kindness.

"Now," he said, when she had finished, "follow me up stairs. Rose is as good a girl as ever lived, though I say it that should not; and I'll warrant she does not mind a little disturbance. Here, Rose! Rose!" he continued, opening the door, "I have brought the lady I spoke to you about; and I must lock you both in together for to-night. Don't let her want any thing. Good night, mademoiselle." And he retired; but, saying to himself, "No, no, it cannot matter; I have the key of the house-door," did not lock that of the bedroom.

"Can I do any thing for you?" inquired Rose, somewhat timidly, and sitting up in her bed. "I shall be so glad if you will let me."

"Thank you," said Marie, "thank you very much; but I shall not want any help. I shall only be too glad to get to sleep, if I can."

"I am sure you will be," said Rose. "Will you tell me if M. de Beaurepaire is with you?"

"Thank GOD, no!" answered Marie. "He escaped."

"I am glad of it, with all my heart," said Rose. "My poor father thinks it his duty, because he is mayor of the town, to do as government would have him. But he is too good a man for his party—he is indeed—though perhaps he might have been somewhat hasty with you just now, because he has been much worried in this business."

"I am very willing to think so, Rose, if you say so. But how comes it to pass that you think so differently from those about you?"

"My poor mother," said Rose, "brought me up to fear GOD and the King; and, a few hours before she died, she begged me never, whatever might happen, to join with those men who did not believe in GOD, and would not honour the King. And I have never done so, and I never will."

"It makes me very happy to hear you say so," replied Marie. "It is like finding a friend when one least expected it. How grieved I am that we are to go on so early!"

"At what time?" inquired Rose.

"M. de Cailly said at eight."

"You shall have breakfast first, any how," said Rose. "But is there nothing else I can do for you?"

"There is one thing," replied Marie; "and yet I hardly like to ask it, because it might be the means of getting you into trouble."

"Do not fear that," answered Rose Le Grand; "tell me what it is."

"Well, then, it is this:—I hear that we stop one whole day in La Flêche. It is just possible that, if my friends knew it, they might make some effort for me. Could you help me in sending them a note?"

"I will do so," replied Rose, after a moment's pause, "on one condition. It is, that you will not date your note, nor give any clue by which they may discover that it was written here. I am bound, you know, to think of my father."

"You are quite right. I will only say that we stop a day in La Flêche. You shall see what I write, if you like."

"No, no," said Rose, "I will not do that. I know I can trust you."

"There, there it is," said Marie de Beaurepaire, after hastily writing down the words which we have already been made acquainted with. "There it is; I will give it you now." And, approaching the bedside of Rose Le Grand, she put it into her hand.

"I will send it off by a man I can trust first thing in the morning; long, I hope, before you are awake. Pray, try now to go to sleep. I can answer for your bed being as comfortable as circumstances will allow; for I made it with my own hands."

"Good night then, dear Rose," said Marie, quite touched by her kindness. "I shall trust to you to call me; for, indeed, I am very, very tired."

Faithful to her word, as soon as the great bell of S. Etienne chimed six, Rose Le Grand went down stairs, and gave the

note to a lad in her father's service, on whom she knew that she might depend. She promised to make an excuse for him to his master; and desired him to make the best of his way to Cerisay, and either to give it to M. de Beaurepaire, should he still be there, or to take care that it reached him, wherever he might be.

Thence she proceeded into the kitchen, to give Lisette directions for preparing breakfast for her guest. She was still engaged in that occupation, when the trampling of horses was heard in front of the house, and presently after a violent thumping and ringing at the door.

"They are earlier than Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire thought," said Rose. "You must go and open the door, Lisette, and then bring up the coffee as quickly as you can. I am not fit to be seen yet; so let me get up stairs first."

Meanwhile the knocking and ringing continued. Rose hurried up stairs, found that Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire was still asleep, and proceeded with her toilette, which was not quite finished. She wondered at the extreme noise which the dragoons made outside, and pulling aside the curtain, she saw that as many as twenty or thirty people were collected in the street, who seemed to be looking on with interest.

"What can all this mean?" she thought. "They cannot be afraid that their prisoner has made her escape!"

At that moment she heard the hall-door open, and in a few seconds the heavy step of two or three men was on the stairs. She drew the bolt in her own door, and it was well she did so; for some one outside turned the handle roughly, and tried to enter.

"Not that door, not that door!" said the voice of Lisette, in a crying tone. "That is my young mistress's room."

"Which way then?" said a harsh gruff voice. And Rose heard them knock at her father's door, which was at the opposite side of the landing.

"What is the matter?" asked Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire, waking: "it all seems like a dream. What is this noise?"

"There must be something wrong," said Rose; "there is a party of dragoons before the house, and some of them have

just gone up to my father's room. Hark! do you not hear their voices?"

They were, indeed, sufficiently audible. "I had better get up at once," said Marie; "they are earlier, I suppose, than they said they would be." And assisted by Rose, she dressed herself with as much haste as possible. In the mean while the hubbub increased. The voices of the dragoons, who had entered the house, were loud and threatening; then the shrill tones of Le Grand made themselves distinctly audible.

"Arrest *me!*" he screamed; "arrest *me!* me, the mayor of Mirebeau! I shall acquaint my friends with this conduct —I shall not fail to represent it in its true light—I shall mention more particularly, General Santerre, that your behaviour is a disgrace to your uniform, and to your masters the Convention."

"Very well, citoyen," said Santerre, "you will be able to do it well; for I shall myself carry you to Paris."

"Oh, Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire!" cried Rose, wringing her hands in agony.

"I will go with you to Paris or any where else," said the self-important *quincaillier;* who (to do him justice) shewed not the slightest symptom of fear. "I will bring you up before the Convention; I will have you stripped of your regimentals; I will teach you how to insult the Mayor of Mirebeau in his own house; then we shall see who will be on the right side, M. Santerre."

"Come, citoyen," said Santerre, "no more of this insolence, if you please. What family have you?—What family has he, woman?" turning fiercely to Lisette.

"One daughter, M. le General," wailed Lisette; "and one servant, that is me, your honour's worship. But I never did any body any harm, I'm sure; nor she neither, poor child, for the matter of that."

"Hold your clack, woman," said the brewer Santerre. "The girl I must take with me. Where is she?"

"What shall we do! what shall we do, Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire!" said Rose. "Oh! what will become of us all!"

"Take courage, Rose," said Marie. "There must be

some mistake in this, so far as your father is concerned. You cheered me up last night, and now, you see, it is my turn to give you comfort. I advise you to open the door at once," —for Santerre was knocking at it.

Rose did so with a trembling hand. "Why, here are two young women!" cried Santerre, with an oath. "Who, in the name of fortune, is this?"

"I am the daughter of M. de Beaurepaire," said Marie quietly, "and a prisoner here."

"A prisoner! how came you here?"

"M. de Cailly brought me here last night from Cerisay."

"Oho! did he? Well, well, I shall relieve him of your charge, and carry you along with me to Paris. I'll warrant we make your head and the little national window acquainted."

"Don't be frightened, young lady," said Le Grand; "I will see this fellow punished when we get to Paris."

"You will, will you?" said Santerre, with a sound between a howl and a laugh. "I tell you what, citoyen, if I hear much more of this sort of thing, I will have you pistolled in your own parlour."

"Oh, my dear father!" cried Rose, throwing her arms round his neck, "pray, pray, be quiet; you cannot help yourself by violence."

"Come, young woman, no sensibility here, if you please," cried Santerre. "Bah! it puts me in mind of Couthon and his spaniel. The prisoners will get ready instantly."

At this moment De Cailly entered. As soon as he saw Santerre, he seemed like the bird that is fascinated by a serpent—he trembled, stood still, and could scarcely get out the words, "Good morning, M. le General."

"Ah! good morning, Cailly," said Santerre, studiously dropping the *De*. "I will take your little prisoner there out of your hands: you may consider yourself quit of the charge."

"As you please," said De Cailly, bowing. "But what? —is M. Le Grand a prisoner?"

"I am so," said the *quincaillier*. "But there must be some mistake in the arrest; there is not a stancher republican

in France than I am. The matter will be set right on our arrival at Paris, I doubt not."

"Ah, we have a very easy and scientific way of arranging all those little mistakes in the *Place de la Revolution*," cried Santerre. "But we are loitering too long. Are the horses ready?" he demanded of a subaltern.

"Perhaps," suggested De Cailly, "the ladies would like some refreshment before they set off."

"Refreshment!" growled Santerre, "they need not much trouble themselves about that. If they want any thing at night, they can call for it." And Le Grand, who exhibited a more dignified demeanour as prisoner than ever he had done as mayor, was mounted on a horse provided for him. While Santerre was superintending the operation of fastening him to it, De Cailly had opportunity to say to Marie,—

"I am sorry, most truly sorry, that you have fallen into the power of that man. He is a disgrace to our profession and to our cause, and indeed to a civilised country. I know not of any thing that can give you a hold on him. You may touch Robespierre by flattering his vanity; Marat, by appealing to his patriotism; Danton is said to have some admiration for beauty; Collot d'Herbois may be bribed; but nothing can touch Santerre. Take care not to offend him, or he may have you shot by the road-side. I have known such things. The only comfort is, he will come to the guillotine at last. But while he is commanding-officer of the district, I must obey."

Marie de Beaurepaire and Rose Le Grand were now summoned to their horses. A considerable crowd had assembled in the street to witness the departure of the mayor, and the unfortunate Le Grand could draw no comfort from their behaviour. The Jacobins hissed and hooted; the Girondists, who constituted not only by far the most respectable, but by far the largest portion of the citizens, were too much intimidated to venture on any demonstration of feeling. The mayor conjectured, and conjectured but too truly, that his violent expressions against the Triumvirate of Terror must have been reported at Paris by some of the numerous spies; and that for them he was called to answer, and perhaps to suffer. Still he had great confidence in the strength of his party, and, to do

him justice, some in the goodness of his principles; and nothing but the unusual paleness of his countenance told the anguish which he was suffering.

The escort consisted of about fifty dragoons; the prisoners rode in the middle, each between two soldiers; Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire being, in studied insult to her aristocratical birth, placed last. It was impossible that she could hold any communication with her fellow-prisoners; and the dragoons who rode at her side spoke but seldom, and then only to interchange some blasphemous or brutal jest, the greater part of which were, fortunately, as unintelligible to the fair girls they were escorting as if uttered in another language.

Nothing had been said of the road that was to be taken, and Marie's anxiety grew intense to learn whether it would be by La Flêche. The crucifixes, however, that stood at the branch lanes and roads, many of which were frightfully ill-treated, could give no information; and when once she asked the soldier at her right hand whether they went near La Flêche, his only answer, clenched with an oath, was that she would know soon enough. She perceived, however, with considerable satisfaction, that they seemed to hold in the straight road to the north.

About midday, the evidently exhausted state of herself and her companion, and probably still greater consideration for the horses, induced Santerre to stop at a small auberge about a mile from Loudun. No one appeared; the house was deserted. The prisoners were, however, carried into the kitchen, and supplied with bread and wine; but conversation was impossible, because a party of dragoons occupied the same apartment, and employed themselves in drinking, smoking, and blaspheming. After about two hours' rest, they were again ordered to mount; and passing rapidly through a large town, which Le Grand knew to be Loudun, though neither Rose nor Marie de Beaurepaire had any idea what place it was, about nightfall they came out on the banks of the Loire, and before dusk entered Saumur.

Here, to the great horror of Marie and Rose, the dragoons drew up before the prison. It was a modern erection, massy, gloomy, and terrible. General Santerre addressed his pri-

soners for the first time, and told them that they must be stirring early on the following morning. The iron doors, studded with knobs and stubs of wrought metal, fell back; a grim-looking and unshaven gaoler looked out, with a lantern in his hand and a brace of pistols at his waist, and demanded what was the matter.

"You will answer for the safety of these prisoners for to-night," said Santerre. "I have them in charge for Paris. Oh! those are their effects, are they? They should have been searched before now: let them be so." And with these words he gave the command, "Forward!"

The prisoners were now in the court. Two or three of the officials came up: their packages were thrown open; and though nothing that was not indispensably necessary was found, all was not replaced.

"Now, old gentleman," said a wardkeeper to Le Grand, "trot off, and I'll lock you up for to-night."

"Are we not to be together?" asked the mayor, in consternation.

"Together?—a likely story!—not you: you in one wing, your daughters, or mistresses, or whatever they are, in the other. Come, young woman, don't make us lose time; if you have nothing to do, we have;" for Rose had thrown herself into her father's arms; and he was very unceremoniously hurried off.

Marie de Beaurepaire had taken hold of her friend's arm, when the turnkey who had opened the door came up to them.

"This way, if you please," he said; "follow me." They did so, up three long flights of stone steps, with iron banisters, lighted by one lamp at each landing, and echoing dismally to the tread; thence down a long passage, on each side of which were doors, so thickly set, as to prove how small a cell was thought necessary for the persons confined there. To each of these doors there was a projection near the top, and in it a sliding panel of iron, so contrived that the gaoler could, at any moment, look into the cell, though the prisoner could not look out of it.

"Let me see," said the turnkey, "No. 17—ay, there is but one woman there, and she is ill, so she will be glad of a

companion. You shall go in there," touching Marie on the shoulder; "and this opposite one will do for you," he added to Rose.

"Oh! can we not be together?" cried the two girls, clinging to each other. "Pray, pray, if it can be managed, put us into any hole, so we may but stay with each other."

"Hoity-toity!" cried the turnkey. "Together, quotha! What, and I not paid for it?"

"But supposing you were paid for it?" inquired Marie, anxiously.

"Why, that would alter the case," answered the gaoler.

"Will this do?" inquired Marie, holding out two louis-d'or, which she had kept concealed in her glove.

The man pocketed them with a nod. "This way, then," he said, going to the end of the passage, and turning down another which branched off to the right. He stopped before a door that seemed to promise better things, selected a key from his bunch, opened it, and ushered the two friends in. The room was very small, but tolerably clean; a little bed and a small table almost filled it.

"There," said the turnkey, setting down the lantern: "supper-hour's over; but, I dare say, if it be paid for, I can get you some."

"I will give you another louis-d'or," said Marie, "if you will get us a little bread and water—or wine, if it may be; and if you will tell us what place this is."

"What place!—why, what should it be but Saumur? Why, where did you drop down from?"

"We have travelled far, and are strangers to this part of the country," replied Marie de Beaurepaire. "There is the money. Now, go and get us the supper," she added, in a more commanding tone, for she perceived that she had acquired some influence over him.

"I will leave the lantern till I come back," said the turnkey; "but you must eat in the dark, for it is contrary to all rules to allow a light after supper." He went, not forgetting to lock the door behind him; and the prisoners felt, for the first time, that they were, like the meanest felons, in a common gaol.

Marie threw her arms round Rose, and kissed her several times. "No tears yet; not yet, dear Rose," she said, as the latter was about to burst into a passionate flood of weeping. "That man must not see it. But oh, I do thank GOD that I am not left to bear this alone."

"And so do I, Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire," said Rose; "so do I from my very heart. But my poor father!"

"Pray call me Marie, Rose; it is like a mockery to use my other name. And as to M. Le Grand, you saw what money did for us: we will try its effect for him."

"You are too, too kind," sobbed Rose. "But you must not leave yourself without any. I have none: and I should not think that they allowed my father to take any."

"I have nearly a hundred louis d'or," replied Marie, extricating another small portion from her dress. "Hark! here is the gaoler. Now we shall see."

The man entered; and it was clear that he thought the present he had received handsome. He brought a loaf, a knife, some detestable-looking butter, and a flask of tolerably good wine, a jug of water, and a tumbler.

"I am as good as my word," he said, setting them down. "I ought not, by rights, to leave you the knife; but you do not look as if you would do much harm with it: and I am sure you will not peach."

"Listen," said Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire. "You saw the gentleman who came with us: if you will do as much for him as for us, here are a couple more louis d'or."

"I will try," said the man. "About separate accommodation I will not promise: but I will do my best. I will do all I can: but I must not be coming back here again, or the governor will smell a rat."

"I will trust you," said Marie. And she put the money into his hand. Receiving it with a "Thank you, ma'amselle," he took up the lantern, bade the prisoners "Good night," and left and locked the cell.

Then all the thoughts that had been locked up in each heart that long day burst forth at once. Hopes, and fears, and wishes were interchanged; tears came to give force to words; nor were there wanting a few passing smiles to gild

them: and though in such deep affliction, the fair companions lay down side by side with thankful hearts, and with brighter hopes than they could have anticipated when they entered that gloomy prison.

The early rays of a May sun, streaming in through the grated window, aroused Rose Le Grand. Even while she was endeavouring to collect her scattered thoughts, and to remember where she was, and what would be the principal events of the day, a dull heavy roar, like distant thunder, was heard to the south. At first she could not conceive what it was; but in a few moments, as it grew clearer and clearer, she came to the conclusion that it must be a heavy cannonade; and she awoke her companion to listen to it.

"It is firing, indeed," said Marie, who was acquainted with a sound to which the mayor's daughter had never yet listened. "This is the morning that the Vendeans were to attack Thouars. My father, and—and—and others of my friends will probably be there; are probably now in danger. And, O Rose, here are we cooped up, without the possibility of learning how they succeed, or knowing of their safety!"

"How far is Thouars from here?" inquired Rose.

"I have not any idea," said Marie. "But surely it cannot be very far; that terrible sound being so clear."

It was evident that there was some commotion in the prison. Steps were heard hurrying to and fro; voices here and there loud in consultation and dispute: and presently the arrival of a party of horse beneath the prison walls. Marie and Rose had but just time to prepare themselves for their journey, when the turnkey summoned them to their horses: "for," said he, "General Santerre is desirous of being in La Flêche as soon as may be."

CHAPTER V.

It was not till nearly four o'clock in the afternoon that M. de Beaurepaire, Charles Duchenier, the peasant Texier, and the prisoner, whose name was Jacques La Force, rode out of Thouars. As soon as they were clear of the town, Charles, who had not yet been able to obtain a moment's private conversation with De Beaurepaire, inquired eagerly of him what were his plans.

"It is well that we should all be acquainted with them," said De Beaurepaire. "Texier, ride up abreast: and now, monsieur"—to the dragoon—"listen to this once for all. If I find you betraying me, as you will have plenty of opportunities of doing, that very instant I put a bullet into your head, even though the next moment I should have one put into my own. I hope you understand that."

"Perfectly, monsieur," said the dragoon.

"Act upon it, then," said De Beaurepaire. "If you bear such hatred to me that you are disposed to lay down your life, so you force me to lay down mine, you will be able to do it: but if (which I rather guess is the case) you have a great idea of personal safety, you will obey us implicitly, till such time as we turn you adrift. And if you do, I promise you a handsome present on dismissing you.—And you too, Texier, understand. If the man gives the least proof of playing us false, shoot him on the spot."

"That I will, monsieur," replied Texier, in a tone of hearty good will which could leave no doubt of his meaning what he said.

"And you, Duchenier—you promise the same?"

"Most undoubtedly," replied Charles.

"Then we are all of one mind; which must be a satisfactory thing for you, my good friend La Force. But now for

my plan. You know that our army is not likely to be within ten leagues of La Flêche this many a day. But we must ride thither, and give out that it is at our heels, and that we are despatched before it to treat with the officer in command."

"It will be certain ruin," said Charles.

"Listen before you decide," returned De Beaurepaire. "We must avoid Saumur, because it is entirely republican, even should there not actually be a body of troops there. But we can cross the river at Les Rosiers—I know this part of the country well—and then we will press on to La Flêche. To-night we will sleep at some *métairie* a short distance from the town; in the mean time the news of our success this morning will have reached it—as what place at the same distance will it not? and it soonest of all, because it is on the high road to Paris. To-morrow we will boldly present ourselves in the town; proclaim ourselves captains in the insurgent army; report that it is a few leagues behind us; demand to see the commanding officer; let him know that we are aware of his having such a prisoner in that town, and require that she be forthwith put into our hands. You do not know the terror that is felt of the brigands so well as I do: we have only to announce that we have ridden on before the rest of the army, by way of not terrifying the inhabitants, and we shall be heard with courtesy. But to clench the matter, this dragoon is a prisoner on his parole—he will corroborate every thing we say.—Woe to you, sirrah! if you do not!—If they offer (which I do not think they will) to take him from us, he must decline to acquire so dishonourable a freedom:—again I say, woe, sirrah, if you do not!—and will accompany us out of the town, as he accompanied us in."

"It is a very bold plan," said Charles Duchenier. "It may cost us all our lives: but certainly it is the only one that can give us a chance of the prize we seek. I am ready to try it to the utmost. What say you, Texier?"

"I would lay down my life any day for Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire," said he: "but, monsieur, if you play your game well, I think there will be no laying down of lives in the case. All I can say is, I will do my part, which appears

to be none other than blowing out this rascal's brains in case he betrays us."

"And to take care that you do not accidentally betray yourself," said De Beaurepaire. "It would be too hazardous to profess that an army had surprised Saumur, (though, in truth, I hope we shall do that in a few days,) but there might be some person present who could contradict us. It will be better to say that the division of the army which I have the honour of commanding has crossed by Les Rosiers (as it will have done, Charles, to the number of our four selves), not wishing to be detained by the siege of Saumur, as we are anxious to advance. I have a letter here from Bonchamp which will forward our scheme. It is open—will you hear it?"

"Pray let me," said Charles.

"'Know all men by these presents, that the bearers, M. de Beaurepaire and M. Duchenier, are authorised by the General-in-chief of the Royalist and Catholic Army to treat with the General commanding-in-chief the National Forces in the town of La Flêche, for the delivery of Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire, now understood to be detained a prisoner in that place. As witness my hand,

'De Bonchamp.

'Head Quarters, May 5, 1793.'

Now, of course," pursued De Beaurepaire, "our terms will be, that the town will be sacked if my daughter is not restored at once. I know well enough that it is scarcely so defensible even as Bressuire; whereas, if she be honourably surrendered, we will give good quarter."

"I like the plan excessively," said Duchenier; "but I think we should be almost safer without the prisoner?"

"No," said De Beaurepaire, "we should not. They will never think of suspecting us, if we have him; but, if we had him not, the slightest suspicion would be fatal to us; because, though I am sure they would not dare to touch us at once, they might keep us under *surveillance* while they sent *their own* commissioners to treat with our army."

"Why, there is something in that," said Duchenier. "I think it is the less of the two dangers."

They had been riding fast while they conversed; and they now struck off the Saumur road to the left. The country grew low and marshy, as bordering on the great river Loire; flocks of sheep, pasturing here and there, with the attendant shepherd-boy, shewed that the horrors of war had not reached this place; here and there were cottage-gardens, which, in times of peace, had supplied the burghers of Saumur, Doué, and even Angers, with early fruit, but now seemed somewhat neglected, and, in some cases, deserted. Still, they pressed on; and in half an hour they were on the banks of the Loire.

The little village of Les Rosiers lay on the other side; and a ferry plied between the two banks. The sun was getting low; the dragon-fly sported amidst the rustling sedge; the kingfisher dipped into the stream, and rose again, displaying all the colours of the rainbow; the bittern boomed from the more distant parts of the marsh; the green weed that slept on the surface of the water undulated to its lazy motions; the distant spire of Les Rosiers glowed like a finger of gold; and the pleasant sounds of evening village life came over the water in a mellow hum. The horses were on the shingles: Duchenier dismounted, and shouted for the boat.

"Now, monsieur," said De Beaurepaire to the prisoner, "I have reserved a pleasant little surprise for you till we were on the point of making the first trial of your fidelity. If you think that you can betray us, because I might be arrested—or any, or all of us might be arrested—before we could get the pistol from our belts, cock it, and point it at your head—you will be disappointed. Look! I have provided myself with a dagger—very easily concealed—look! thus; and just as easily pulled out: and, by all the saints in heaven (if you believe in them), I want but a shadow of suspicion to plunge it into your heart. I am really sorry, monsieur, to appear unpolite; but the time, you will observe, will not allow me to stand very much on ceremony."

La Force seemed considerably disconcerted at this avowal, and at the proximity in which M. de Beaurepaire seemed resolved to stand to him. He, however, said nothing. And now the creaking of the leather strap that served for row-lock, and the splash of the heavy oars in the water, grew louder and louder; and presently the boat's head grated on the beach. She was managed by two fishermen in their picturesque costume of red caps, checked waistcoats, leathern breeches, and immense jack-boots.

"Good evening, messieurs," said one of them. "Are you for Les Rosiers?"

"Yes, we are," said Charles getting in. "What! you seem all pretty quiet here?"

"Pretty well, pretty well," replied the first speaker, assisting Duchenier to make his horse follow him into the boat. "And we shall be quieter ere long, if your good army can drive yonder rascals back to Paris."

"You are a royalist, then?" inquired De Beaurepaire.

"Never doubt of that, monsieur; so is all the village."

"Why don't you send some of your likeliest lads to serve in the army? We cannot have too many."

"Well, monsieur, and they do talk of listing: but, somehow, the war has not got down to us yet, and so the old folks have been for keeping quiet. There was a man passed through Longué to-day though—that's only two leagues from Les Rosiers—but mayhap your honours know that as well as I do. Well, there was a man passed through Longué, as I hear say, enough to make every man, woman, and child, take up arms, if he comes near us again."

"Why, who was that?" asked Charles.

"Why, that villain Santerre," answered the fisherman, giving so tremendous a tug at his oar, by way of expressing his indignation, that the boat's head flew round six or seven points the other side. "If ever there was a devil in man's flesh, that's he. I do sometimes think," and he crossed himself, "that it must be the great devil of all let loose on us."

"What! had he any troops with him?" inquired De Beaurepaire.

"Ay, monsieur, some fifty or sixty, dressed like that

man," and he pointed to La Force, "whom I take to be your prisoner."

"He is," answered De Beaurepaire. "But where were they going?"

"To La Flêche, I heard," said the man. "They had some prisoners too—ladies—or women however."

"Is it possible," said Charles, "that——"

"I hope, I trust not," said De Beaurepaire, with more agitation than Duchenier had ever yet seen him display. "I would sooner trust my child a thousand times over with Robespierre or Danton than with Santerre."

"But he said more than one;—did you not, *mon ami?*"

"Yes, monsieur; two, I think they said—but I am sure more than one."

"We know that there were no servants taken with her," said De Beaurepaire; "because we saw them safe before we left Cerisay. That gives me hope. But then, their going to La Flêche. And yet, how many prisoners must have passed that way!"

"If I might be so bold as to ask," said the man, "has monsieur lost any one in whom he is interested?"

"My daughter," said the other: "I am going to demand her at La Flêche."

"To seek her at La Flêche!" said the fisherman. "Why, you will be shot, as sure as this is the Loire."

"Not quite so sure, I hope," answered De Beaurepaire. "The Catholic Army is close at our heels,"—he swallowed the story with a better grace than Duchenier would have exhibited,—"and we are empowered to make terms there."

"Well, monsieur, if they are in as much terror there as they are at Beaufort and Baugé, they will not stand much upon terms. But I am rejoiced beyond measure that the army is so near."

"This dragoon will tell you how near," said De Beaurepaire, looking significantly at him.

"Not more than two leagues," said La Force. "They will be here, I guess, before midnight."

The boat was now nearing the opposite shore. "Do you know La Flêche?" inquired Charles.

"Yes, I do," answered the boatman. "Many's the time I have been there with a cart-load of fish."

"Is there any auberge some league or so on this side of it? We want to put up there to-night, and not to ride into the town till to-morrow."

"Yes, there is, monsieur. It is in a little village, called Coudron; and the sign is the *Perche*. It stands on the left-hand side, just through the village; and there are three great ash-trees opposite."

"Do you know the landlord?"

"What! old Claude Salmeron? Ay; many a glass of wine have we had together. He makes it his maxim to cry with the loudest; so to-night, I suppose, he will be all for the royalists."

"One thing more," said De Beaurepaire, as the boat touched the shore; "what time did Santerre pass through Baugé?"

"In the forenoon, monsieur; but I don't rightly know the hour."

The party disembarked, and gave the boatmen so liberal a fare that both red caps were held off the heads they respectively fitted all the time the travellers were mounting. The latter rode off at a fast trot; and the fishermen repaired to the village, to tell and to comment on what they had heard.

"Do you mean to ride right through Baugé?" inquired Charles.

"Oh, yes," said De Beaurepaire. "If they stop us, it will be but the same tale as at La Flêche."

"I wish we could be there to-night," said Duchenier.

"I wish it as much as you can do. But I have thought it over, and it would not answer. Consider, we only gained Thouars this morning. They know that our marches are astonishingly quick, it is true; but they also must know, that to be within four or five leagues of La Flêche—and our troops must not be more than that, Charles—would be physically impossible. No one but a peasant would have believed the account we gave just now—though that was far more within *the compass of* possibility.—Which reminds me, sirrah," he

added, turning to the dragoon, "the next time you have to tell a lie, tell a better one. Do you hear?"

"Why, monsieur," said the man, "you asked me how far off was the royalist army, and I thought you wanted it to be near."

"So I did, sirrah; but not impossibly near. You mind what you are about. You shall play no tricks with me."

"Only conceive," said Charles, after a pause, during which the horses' hoofs rang out merrily over the pavé, "her joy at being so unexpectedly rescued. It will be like life in death."

"Ay," answered De Beaurepaire, "it will be so, in more senses than one. I don't wish to discourage you; only remember,—and you too, Texier, remember,—that a slip after success may ruin us just as much as one before. The best way will be, to continue to deceive her till we are quite clear of their clutches. One can never tell what women will do. She might faint, or go into hysterics; and then the whole might come out."

Duchenier again relapsed into meditation. It was now a glorious twilight. The sky was cloudless, and intensely still and blue; lines of red and green, bright but somewhat cold, as in the spring, were clearly marked out on the western horizon. The dew was falling, and calling forth the sweet scent of the fresh hedge, from dog-brier, may, or young filbert. The flowers had closed on earth; but, as if in rivalry of them, Venus, like a flower of pure silver, began to gleam brightly in the heavens. By the time the travellers reached Baugé, it was nearly dark; and, finding that all was perfectly quiet, they ventured to water their horses on the outskirts of the town, at the other side; and gave the same account they had given to the boatmen.

It was not, however, so favourably received. The landlord swore at the news; loiterers began to gather in the street; the hostler moved slowly; one or two men attempted to approach the horses' heads; and some one at a distance cried, "Knock them off!"

"Stand off, my masters!" cried De Beaurepaire, keeping La Force between him and Texier. "Knock us off! And

who would be the sufferers for that by noon to-morrow? Stand off, fellow!" hitting one of the bystanders a slight blow with the handle of his whip. "Now, hostler, is that water coming?"

The little crowd continued to shew symptoms of anger, but seemed to judge it prudent to abstain from any thing like actual assault. Duchenier watched La Force's countenance, which, in truth, would have presented a curious study for a physiognomist. The lips were compressed tightly, as if to keep in the words that would fain have burst forth; the brow was contracted; the eyes glistened; while the fingers played nervously with the switch which the dragoon carried instead of a whip. However, he seemed to have resolved not to betray his companions; and at the moment the crowd were most troublesome, glanced once or twice at De Beaurepaire's right hand, which was on his dagger.

At length the reckoning was paid; and the crowd, with a discontented growl, like that of a wild beast deprived of his prey, suffered the adventurers to ride on. They had scarcely, however, put their horses into a trot, when a stone, flung by some one among the mob, struck De Beaurepaire on the shoulder.

"We must not put up with this, Charles," said he. "If we had an army close behind us, we should not.—Texier, ride on slowly with La Force."

He reined his horse round, and, accompanied by Duchenier, rode back to the inn-door. The little crowd began to disperse in various directions, as if thinking that they had carried the matter too far.

"Landlord," said De Beaurepaire coolly, "give o up the name of the scoundrel who threw that stone."

The landlord hesitated between his fear of the brigands and his dislike of displaying any want of courage before those in whose presence he was accustomed to boast what great deeds he would do, if ever the necessities of the nation called him to take up arms.

"Oh, very well," said De Beaurepaire, "please yourself. I suppose you were the person. We shall remember it when *we march through* Baugé."

"It was not I, monsieur," said the other; "on my honour, it was not."

"Your honour!" cried De Beaurepaire; "what is your honour worth? No, no; you are the man, without a doubt. Very well; I shall remember."

"Stay, monsieur," said the landlord; "it was Nicolas Cautier."

"Where does he live?" inquired De Beaurepaire.

"At yonder cottage," answered mine host very unwillingly. "Yonder, with the stone step before it."

"You have done wisely, landlord, in telling me. Good evening." And they rode off.

"Now, Charles," continued his friend, "we have thoroughly frightened those fellows, which may be a great thing on our return. I wonder how far it is to this Coudron. We shall have to knock them up, if it be very much further."

"It is a fortunate thing we did not attempt to stop at Baugé," observed Duchenier: "they would certainly have done us a mischief."

"It must have been Santerre's march through the place which has set them up so, if they were ever as terrified as that fisherman told us. But come; we must be doing our best to get on; for, on all accounts, we should be early."

Night deepened and deepened. The moon came forth in glory; the country grew wilder; and at length, about ten o'clock, emerging from a little dell into which the road dipped, they saw before them, rising through a cluster of trees to the right, the gable-head of a church-tower.

"Here we are!" cried Duchenier: "now for the *Perche*."

They were not long in discovering it; but there was no light to be seen, and it was plain that the inmates had retired to rest. Texier knocked long and loudly; and in a few moments an upper casement was thrown open, and a man looked out, with a nightcap on his head, and a pistol in his hand.

"Who's there?" he cried. "What's the matter?"

"Officers from the Royalist army," answered Beaurepaire, "which is just behind. We want accommodation for to-night; for we have despatches to deliver at La Flèche to-morrow."

"I will let you in," answered Claude Salmeron, after reconnoitring the party for a few moments longer. "Wait but a couple of minutes." And in less time than that, the door was opened, and the party entered.

"Texier, will you see to the horses?" asked De Beaurepaire. "I will look after the prisoner meanwhile."

"Did monsieur say that the Royalist army was close behind?" asked the landlord.

"Some five or six leagues off," answered De Beaurepaire. "You heard of our taking Thouars?"

"That we did," cried Salmeron, beginning to be a vehement loyalist. "That we did: and they tell me that General Quetineau was made prisoner."

"They tell you truly, mine host. Have you any thing for supper? for we must be off early."

"I will see, monsieur." And he left the room so to do.

"It is chilly," said De Beaurepaire, endeavouring to rekindle the almost extinguished embers. "La Force, you may sit down; but I will thank you to sit a little further from the door. That's better.—Well, Duchenier, no one can have had better luck hitherto, I think."

"You have managed admirably, monsieur. It seems hardly conceivable that we are but a league or so off."

"I knew the boldest strokes generally answer best.—Well, Texier, are the horses littered down well?"

"Yes, monsieur; the people here seem royalists, and glad to do any thing for you. The hostler and stable-boy are up, and bustling about."

After partaking of the supper which the landlord, in fulfilment of his promise, had provided for them with his best skill, our party made arrangements. La Force was consigned to a small closet without a window, which opened into the room which was occupied by De Beaurepaire and Duchenier; and Texier, at his own request, slept outside the door of this apartment. The night passed over without any event of importance; and at six o'clock the next morning the adventurers were again on horseback. The tall tower of S. Jacques in La Flêche rose clearly before them on the horizon. The morning was cool and bright; and as they urged onward their

horses over the league that they had yet to pass, their spirits seemed to rise with the necessity.

"Now," said Duchenier, "we shall soon know our fate; whatever it be, anxiety like this is almost worse than certainty of failure."

"Not it," replied De Beaurepaire; "but there is no occasion for so much nervousness; if we don't betray ourselves, we must succeed. Upon my word, I think our greatest danger is when we first fall in with the National Guard. They may shoot us through the head, without waiting to hear what we have to say."

Houses began to thicken on each side of the road; and, among the few persons whom they met, the sight of two royalist officers, with their white cockades, seemed to create quite a sensation. Still there was no word or sign of insult; and the Vendeans rode through one of the suburbs at a round trot, but without any symptoms of great haste. At length they reached the bridge which crossed the old moat. The moat itself was in many places dry, and in some turned into gardens; and the drawbridge had long become a fixed erection of stone. The gate, however, was kept up,—the guard-house was formed in it; and two sentinels were posted at the further end of the bridge.

Texier and La Force rode rather the first; then followed the officers. The sentinels gazed at each other in stupid amazement, till De Beaurepaire thought they must mean to let him pass on. But he was mistaken. As he rode forward, one of them stepped up to him with "Halt! or I shoot you through the head. You are a prisoner."

"Ground your arms!" said De Beaurepaire, as if giving an order to his own troops. "Send some one to conduct us to the general commanding in chief; we are charged with a message to him from the Royalist and Catholic army, by this time in possession of Baugé."

He had the satisfaction of seeing that his announcement was believed. The sentinels could not sufficiently command their countenances to conceal the fact of their being thunderstruck.

"Follow me to the guard-house, monsieur," said the one

that had not yet spoken. "The sous-lieutenant will speak with you."

They crossed the bridge. "Wait here," said the soldier, "till I tell him of your arrival." While he went in, several of the Guards, not then on duty, gathered round the comers.

"Six hours hence," observed De Beaurepaire to his companion, "our men will be in that guard-house. I hope the quarters are comfortable."

"They are so, monsieur," said La Force, who, not knowing what turn matters might take, had come to the conclusion, that to carry himself as really on his parole would be the safest thing he could do. "I have been here before."

"Why, comrade," said an old soldier, "what, are you here with the brigands?"

"Prisoner on parole," replied La Force.

The sous-lieutenant came out. "Messieurs," he said, "I am informed that the Vendean insurgents are now at Baugé, and that you are deputed from them to treat with General Santerre."

"You are correctly informed, monsieur," replied De Beaurepaire, with a polite bow.

"This is very strange," answered the sous-lieutenant. "Saumur, to my certain knowledge, was in our hands at six o'clock yesterday evening."

"So it is now, monsieur, for any thing I know to the contrary. The army crossed at Les Rosiers."

"You are bold men, messieurs, to put your head into the lion's mouth. Why, we could have you shot as rebels on the spot."

"So you might, monsieur," said De Beaurepaire, shrugging his shoulders; "so you might: but I do not think you will. There would be a very unpleasant reckoning to pay, as soon as our forces were in sight."

"You have some document from your leader, whoever he is?" asked the officer.

"Here is a letter from M. de Bonchamp, which you are at liberty to read," replied the other.

The sous-lieutenant read it. "Oh!" said he, "that partly *explains the matter.* You feared, I suppose, that the lady

mentioned in this paper would be hurried off, if you did not anticipate the motions of your troops?"

"The remark does honour to your penetration, monsieur," replied De Beaurepaire, with serene courtesy. "I was aware that we incurred some danger; but I felt almost persuaded that the good sense of your officers would see the propriety of treating us with courtesy, when you must know as well as we do"—and he smiled pleasantly—"that the town is perfectly indefensible for half an hour."

"Hum!" said the sous-lieutenant; "I think it might be held out longer."

"Well, monsieur, we will say an hour. You might possibly not be shot till two o'clock. As particular friends of De Bonchamp's, we should, of course, be sufficiently revenged. This soldier, who is on parole, can give you any information."

The officer was completely taken in. "Where were you made prisoner?" he asked.

"At Thouars, monsieur."

"And you left the insurgents at ——?"

"I left them with these gentlemen, monsieur."

"That was at ——?"

"At Les Rosiers, monsieur."

De Beaurepaire could not help drawing a long breath; for, during the whole of this conversation, he felt that his life hung on a thread. Now he was secure that La Force had so thoroughly committed himself, as to have no chance of safety except in committing himself still further, by reiterating and enforcing his former statements.

"I will accompany you to General Santerre," said the sous-lieutenant, after a moment's pause: "that, I think, will be the most satisfactory way to all parties. Of course, I can say nothing as to your proposal: but I have no objection to acknowledging, what, I am sure, General Santerre himself will acknowledge in the frankest manner, that the young lady in question is a prisoner here."

Accompanied, then, by this officer, De Beaurepaire and Duchenier repaired to General Santerre's lodging. A house, not recently inhabited, had been taken possession of by him, and fitted up as well as the time admitted for himself and his

staff. Every thing shewed the debased and brutalised character of these men. The state of the hall would have disgraced the lowest auberge in La Flèche. Filth of all kinds lay exposed to view, mingled with the most precious objects: the massive silver candlesticks from the Altar of the neighbouring church peeped out from a heap of ashes, cast down in the house because it was too much trouble to carry them to the ash-heap; tobacco-pipes, tobacco, fragments of broken meat, tumblers half full of spirits, and a strong scent of brandy, proved that a debauch had recently been going on. At the door of this house stood the tree of liberty; and as the Vendeans entered, the little crowd that had accompanied them augmented considerably, and seemed resolved to await their exit.

The sous-lieutenant himself appeared rather ashamed of the condition of the General's head-quarters; for with the remark, "One cannot always have things straight on a march," he ushered his companions into an unfurnished parlour, where he requested them to wait, while he should seek Santerre.

"La Force," said De Beaurepaire, as soon as the door was closed, "it is now your interest, as well as ours, to stick to the tale you have fabricated. If Santerre finds us out, you will be shot five minutes after. Go on as you have begun, and if you bring us off, on the honour of a French gentleman, I will provide for you handsomely."

"Monsieur," replied La Force, "if you are only true to yourself, you have no occasion to fear me. If I don't get out of this town with you, I shall never get out at all: and I promise you, I am not so taken with its appearance as to wish that."

"I am pretty sure, monsieur," said Texier, "that Santerre is an arrant coward. Every one who has known him at all says so."

"Like enough—like enough," said De Beaurepaire; "he will not be the first blusterer by many that is so. But hush! I hear footsteps."

The door opened, and a man entered in the uniform of a *republican* general,—ill-made, ill put-on, and dirty. He had

a low forehead, grisled dark hair, fishy eyes with something of a squint, a large projecting mouth, whiskers of inordinate size matted and untrimmed, an awkward gait, and a stoop which took off from his height, so as to make him appear a short, instead of a middle-sized man,—an appearance to which his stoutness also contributed. Such was the brewer Santerre.

He was closely followed by the sous-lieutenant. "These, M. le General," he said, "are the deputies from the insurgents." De Beaurepaire and La Force bowed: Duchenier would not so far honour a man who had presided at the murder of his sovereign; and Texier, whether from the same reason, or merely from the force of example, did the same thing.

"Well, citoyens," said Santerre, "I think your message here the very coolest piece of impudence that I ever had the pleasure of hearing. What! ask me to give up a prisoner, because a pack of beggarly brigands mean, some day or other, to come and invest a strong place like this? And so you really persuaded yourselves that I should let you go back again? Having come so far, it were a pity not to travel a little further; and as I am going to Paris, I think I will have you guillotined there, rather than shot here."

"As you please, monsieur," said De Beaurepaire, with imperturbable coolness. "We shall probably lay down our lives in the service of our king some day; and whether by a cannon-shot or a guillotine is very immaterial: tastes differ. Only, as by this time to-morrow the royalist army will be in possession of La Flêche, you will know fully what to expect for the town,—you may expect that no mercy will be shewn."

"And who on earth cares," cried Santerre with an oath, "whether you shew mercy or not? Burn the town down, if you please; I shall not lose a sous. That was what you trusted to, was it?—you have thrust your head into the lion's mouth with a vengeance."

De Beaurepaire saw his mistake. He should have calculated on the utter recklessness of Santerre's nature. He should have taken care to make it known to the inhabitants of La Flêche that the safety of their town depended on the liberation of his daughter; and they would have seen that

his terms were granted. Santerre, however much he might have had the disposition, was not in possession of the force to oppose them. But now it was only known in the town that the Vendeans were near, and that the two officers were charged with some proposition from the captors of Thouars. All these thoughts flashed in a moment through De Beaurepaire's mind; and he resolved on endeavouring after an opportunity of speaking to the people.

"In that case, monsieur," said he, "I shall be under the very painful necessity, on arriving at Paris, of denouncing you to the Convention as accessary to the loss of La Flêche, which long ere that time will have been lost, by your leaving it when you knew an attack was intended by the insurgents."

"Very well," cried Santerre, in a fury; "I will soon hinder that.—Danville," to the sous-lieutenant, "order out a file of musketeers into the court-yard."

De Beaurepaire seemed utterly confounded by the overthrow of his plan. Duchenier had augured, from the moment Santerre began to speak, that there was no hope; and had nerved himself for the issue. But Texier, whose mind was less occupied by anxiety for the liberation of Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire, just as Danville was turning the handle, collared Santerre in an instant with his left hand, and held a pistol to his head with his right.

"First of all, you scoundrel," said he, "I shall blow out your brains; and then your soldiers may do what they like with ours."

Danville, who had sprung forward to his general's aid, was confronted by Duchenier. Their swords crossed, and the sous-lieutenant's flew up to the ceiling. This took but a second; and the general made a violent effort to release himself from the peasant.

"Hold! hold!" shouted De Beaurepaire, who kept near to La Force, ignorant how that worthy personage might think fit to act. "Keep him fast, Texier, but don't hurt him. What is to be done?"

"I am for killing him," said Duchenier; "going out, boldly proclaiming the deed, and daring the townspeople to hurt us, letting them know that their safety depends on ours."

"They would not touch us, but the soldiers would," replied the other; "and our gaining Marie depends on them. No; I have a plan,—and, thank GOD, there is pen and ink. First, M. Danville, you must give me your word not to act against us, in any way, for four-and-twenty hours."

"I shall not give any such promise," returned the young officer.

"I am extremely sorry, monsieur," said De Beaurepaire, with the most winning suavity, "to hint at any thing unpleasant; but, much as I value your life, allow me to suggest that I am bound to prefer that of my friends; and must take the one, for the sake of preserving the other."

"Do so," said Danville.

"Allow me to suggest," said De Beaurepaire, "that you will not in the least advantage your cause by dying for it."

"Give the promise; don't be a fool," growled out Santerre, in a somewhat trembling voice.

"Well, then, I promise," said he.

"That's well," replied De Beaurepaire. "Duchenier, mind our worthy friend here." And he took a pen, and having pulled a small piece of paper from his pocket-book, offered the two to Santerre.

"Now, M. le General," he said, "I could easily require you to write an order for the liberation of the prisoner; and it might be obeyed in five minutes, and we should all make our escape but one. But whoever was employed to intimidate you—as I am sorry that we are obliged to do—could not escape, because he must remain till last. I therefore prefer another method." He drew out a pistol, and cocked it. "Now, monsieur, write what I dictate, or I put an end to your proceedings in this world."

"Give me the pen," said Santerre, sullenly.

"Write thus:—'I promise, in consideration of the sum of thirty thousand francs, this day received by me,'—is that down?"

"Yes," said Santerre.

De Beaurepaire satisfied himself by looking over the general's shoulder, and then proceeded: "'To use my utmost endeavours to deliver Louis XVII.'"—

"I cannot write that," said Santerre; "it would bring my neck to the guillotine whenever you chose."

"I know it would," said De Beaurepaire. "I shall therefore keep the document in my pocket till we and the prisoner are safely out of the town, and then I give you my honour to destroy it. If you cause us to be arrested before that, I give the paper to your soldiers; and you know that they stand too much in awe of Convention to hesitate about denouncing you. If you call M. Danville as a witness, all that he will prove is, that you are a coward — pardon the term, monsieur — and the Convention will guillotine you for that crime, as readily as for treason."

"I will give you my word," said Santerre, "to liberate your daughter. You require me to trust to yours; you must also confide in mine."

"I fear, monsieur, that I must trouble you to proceed. Will you take up the pen?"

"What am I to do?" inquired Santerre of Danville.

"Consult your honour," answered he.

"He must find it first," said Texier.

"Now, monsieur," urged De Beaurepaire; "I give you half a minute." And he took out his watch.

"I am ready," said Santerre, taking the pen.

"'To use my utmost endeavours,'" dictated De Beaurepaire, "'to deliver Louis XVII. from his present captivity'— is that written? — 'and to overthrow the usurped and rebellious power of the Convention:' may I trouble you to write a little more firmly, monsieur? 'and in particular to deliver Robespierre, Danton, and Marat into the hands of his majesty's friends.' Now, monsieur, sign your name, and date it; let me see; this is May; we'll date it Feb. 3, 1793."

Santerre did so. De Beaurepaire folded up the precious paper, put it in his pocket-book, and that in his pocket.

"But you promise—you give me your honour," said Santerre, with now undisguised terror, "to destroy that paper as soon as you are in safety?"

"I will do more. If you send a soldier with me, I will enclose it carefully in an envelope, and return it to you by him, when we are a mile from the town."

"I will do so," said Santerre.

"Now, then," cried Duchenier, "shew us the way to Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire."

It had been previously arranged that Santerre, his prisoners, and his suite, should spend this day at La Flêche, in order to give time for the arrival of some other royalists who were to be conveyed to Paris. Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire, the mayor, and his daughter, had found somewhat better treatment from Santerre than they had expected. The fact was that, marching through an unsettled country, he was anxious not to give unnecessary offence; what might have been his conduct as he advanced nearer to Paris, and was more secure of his victims, it were difficult to say. On arriving at La Flêche, Marie and Rose were again permitted to occupy the same apartment; and the mayor was put in possession of an adjacent one, which he occupied by himself. Santerre, whether it were that he had military business elsewhere, or that he knew himself to be the object of abhorrence to Royalist and Girondist, had not visited his prisoners since their arrival in the town.

They were accordingly seated together at breakfast on the following morning; and Le Grand, finding himself more civilly treated, began to recover his animation.

"You see," he said, "Rose; you see, Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire, that these fellows, as they get near Paris, are afraid of the representations I shall make. You observe that they treat us with more courtesy. Ah, ah! I understand them. They think to bribe my good word with Convention. Not mine, indeed! I will have them all punished as they deserve. I will denounce them as villains and robbers! I will ——"

"My dear father," said Rose, "would it not be more fit, at a time of such great danger to us all, to lay aside these thoughts of revenge? I feel sure that you will never have the power of which you speak. If we were not completely in the hands of these men, they would not have ventured to treat us as they have done."

"Danger, child!" he answered, angrily; "never have the power! You are talking nonsense; you do not know what you are saying. What! I, the mayor of Mirebeau; I,

who, I may say, have been at the head of the revolutionary party in Poitou; I, who have been honoured with the intimate acquaintance of Vergniaud and Lanjuinais; I not able to make these rascals smart for their impudence! Pshaw! pshaw!" And he took a long pinch of snuff.

"Indeed, M. le Grand," said Marie, "I fear you deceive yourself in this matter. I do not know much of politics—I do not wish to know much of them—but I have constantly heard that the party you support were losing their influence. The thorough Jacobins were willing to use your leaders while the king lived: after that, they found them only a clog, and they will get rid of them as soon as they can. I have often heard my father say that the days of the Girondists were numbered."

"Use *us!*" said, or rather shrieked, the mayor. "Use *us*, indeed! What, do you mean to say that we are to be browbeaten by beggarly rascals like Danton and Robespierre? No, no, mademoiselle: I have the greatest respect for your father, but he knows nothing about the state of politics. He must have lived at the fountain's head, as I may say that I have done, to be able to see the various bearings of the question."

Marie smiled sadly, but did not answer; and Rose, who seemed to read her friend's thoughts, with a half-mortified, half-affectionate look, expressed a wish that she might prove a false prophet.

"For though I know that you do not approve of my father's party," she said, "yet I am sure you would not confound it with the Jacobins, whom he detests almost as heartily as you do."

"God forbid!" answered Marie. "I believe some of them began with the pure wish of establishing a republic, with as little loss of blood as might be. But, in these fearful times, the worst and most desperate men always acquire the most power; because, when there is no restraint of law, those who have no hindrance from conscience must have a great worldly advantage over those who have."

"Well, well," said Le Grand, impatiently; but he was interrupted by heavy footsteps along the passage. The bolt

was drawn back on the outside; the key snapped in the lock, and Santerre entered, with two officers.

"Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire," said he, "I have to announce to you that you are at liberty to go with these gentlemen."

Marie looked up, and saw her father and Duchenier. Though she was naturally accustomed to curb her feelings, it is no wonder that they were beyond her control on this occasion. With a faint cry, she attempted to spring up, but would have fallen senseless on the floor, had not Rose caught her in her arms.

"Don't waste more time than you can help," said Santerre, and left the apartment.

"The joy is too much for her," said Rose, who saw the nature of the surprise, though not knowing who the visitors were. "Father, perhaps you would go into your own apartment for a few minutes; and if you, messieurs, would accompany him, I think I could bring her round more quickly."

"I am her father," said De Beaurepaire: "I will not lose sight of her again. Charles, you are not her husband yet, though, please GOD, you soon shall be." And Duchenier very unwillingly accompanied Le Grand.

In a few moments, Marie, who had been laid on the bed, recovered her recollection, and heard, piece by piece, the joyful news; that the Vendeans were but six leagues off (for De Beaurepaire acted on his own advice, and kept up the deception), that Santerre had given permission for her instant liberation, and that she was to ride, as soon as ever she should feel able, to the advancing Catholic army.

"Shall I call Charles?" asked her father. "Are you strong enough to see him?"

"Oh, yes, yes!" said Marie, eagerly. "But don't go, Rose — don't leave me,"— for Rose was about to leave the room,—"I cannot part with you."

Charles Duchenier entered, followed by Le Grand, who could not imagine that his presence could be unwelcome any where. While the lovers were hurriedly telling each other of their happiness, De Beaurepaire took the opportunity of asking if mademoiselle and monsieur were also prisoners.

This brought on an explanation; and De Beaurepaire, rather moved by what he considered a point of honour than by any other feeling, was just debating in his own mind whether he could not liberate Le Grand and his daughter as well, when Duchenier, after saying, "If it possibly can be done, dear Marie," came towards the rest of the party.

"A word with you, M. de Beaurepaire," he said. "Marie is excessively anxious that the young lady who is her fellow-prisoner should accompany us. That cannot be, unless her father goes too. The man is a Girondist; but perhaps he might be made something of—and he has influence."

"I was just thinking," replied the other, "that it would hardly be consistent with our honour to leave two people, who seem to have behaved well to my daughter, in the fangs of that devil Santerre; especially when, as we know very well, he will not dare to refuse us that, or any other request."

"Announce it to them, then, monsieur," said Duchenier; and he returned to his place by the couch where Marie was lying.

"M. le Grand," said De Beaurepaire, "I am happy to be able to make you the offer of escorting you from this place to the royalist army. Your political opinions, I know, are not ours; but I need not say they shall be respected."

Rose only said, "Thank GOD! thank GOD!" and burst into a flood of tears.

Her father, however, thought fit to express his sentiments in a somewhat different strain. "I am much obliged to you, M. de Beaurepaire," said he, "for your offer; and I shall accept it with gratitude on one condition. You must not think me bound to change my opinions, if I follow you to the Vendean army. I hate the malpractices of these Jacobins; but GOD forbid that I should be a royalist."

"Monsieur," said De Beaurepaire politely, "I respect you for your conscientiousness. You lay yourself under no obligation by accepting our protection; but you must feel that, except with us, you cannot, for the present, be in safety."

"I think, Charles," said Marie, "that I feel strong enough to ride now. Do not let us lose an unnecessary mo-

ment. I feel as if something even yet might occur to prevent my being free."

"I am quite as unwilling, dearest, as you can be, to lose any needless time. Do you think, monsieur, that Marie might venture?"

"Oh, yes, I am sure I can," she said, rising, and taking Charles's arm. "But must you not make some arrangement about M. le Grand?"

"I will go down and do that," said her father; "General Santerre will not object to it, I am sure."

"You seem to have a great deal of influence with him, monsieur," observed Le Grand.

"It is reasonable we should have," answered De Beaurepaire, as he left the room, "with a victorious army so near." . . . . . .

He passed along the passage, down the stairs, and was about to cross the court by which they were separated from the house where Santerre was lodging, when Danville met him.

"Allow me, monsieur," said he, "to say a word in private. You are a man of honour; Santerre is not. I feel that I may safely put my life in your hands."

De Beaurepaire bowed.

"We are enemies, monsieur," replied the sous-lieutenant; "but I wish to be an open enemy. General Santerre has thought fit to direct six picked marksmen to await you about a mile from this town, on the road to Baugé; they have instructions to take off yourself, your friend, your servant, and the dragoon whom you have on parole; to seize all papers found on your persons, and to bring back your daughter here, without injuring her. You must make your arrangements to avoid this danger. I have done enough, and perhaps too much, in warning you of it."

"Monsieur," said De Beaurepaire, "you have laid me under an obligation which is, undoubtedly, the greatest I ever received. All I can say is, if ever the time comes that I am enabled to assist you in any way, I need not assure you that you may command any services that I can render. Will you allow me to ask one thing? Did I understand you rightly that the men were not to hurt my daughter?"

"They had strict orders to take care, in firing, that she did not suffer in the least. You may rest assured on that head."

"I am obliged, monsieur," replied De Beaurepaire.

"We had better not remain longer in conversation," said Danville. "Were you going to the general?"

"I was so, to demand the liberation of the other prisoners."

"Oh, he will easily grant that, after the little private arrangement he has just made. Follow me to him, monsieur."

There was, indeed, no difficulty. Santerre seemed to have lost the sullen ferocity of his manner; and remarked, though not without a slight touch of sarcasm, that "any thing M. de Beaurepaire wished, he could, of course, find no possibility of refusing."

Horses were now ordered to be prepared, both for the party and for the dragoon who was to accompany it out of the town, and to bring back the paper which Santerre had been compelled to sign. Having declined an offer of refreshment made by Santerre, the ladies were summoned from their apartment, and mounted, with joyful hearts, the beasts that had been provided for them. Marie had her own favourite mare, which had carried her hither from Cerisay, and which now arched her beautiful neck, and whinnied for joy as she felt her mistress once more on her back.

CHAPTER VI.

It has sometimes happened to me, in my rambles through Somersetshire or Sussex, to come to a stand-still in some lovely spot, where my road branched into two. The one fork led onwards into a fair, open country, specked with churches, cottages, and tree-tufts, and girdled in by a glorious belt of hills; the other plunged into a deep and overhung lane, where the trees, intermingling from either side, made a groining of bright leaves, and the jutting rocks were grey or yellow with the lichen, or gaudy with the heath or the foxglove. In such a spot I never hesitated long. The open country might have its charms for others; I always chose the deep quiet lane.

And even so it must be here. I am now come to a place in my tale where two paths are open before me. I might take my reader back to the Catholic army, with its thousand fights: I may also call upon him to accompany those in whom, I would hope, he is disposed to feel some interest, in their less extended, but more romantic, adventures. The latter shall be our choice.

The inhabitants of La Flêche saw, not without great curiosity, and some apprehension, the little band of royalists that rode steadily through the narrow streets, and over the moat, on the road to Baugé. A report had spread that the Vendeans were not very far distant; and they therefore allowed our party to proceed without the slightest approach to insult. As soon as they had crossed the moat, Duchenier was for riding forwards at a good pace.

"I must be general, Charles," said De Beaurepaire; "and we must not ride on fast. M. le Grand, I must request you to ride in between your daughter and mine. You,

sirrah"—to Santerre's soldier—"shall go next; and we four will bring up the rear."

"I may trust to your honour, monsieur," said Le Grand; "and I am sure you have some meaning in what you say." And he rode forward. Marie looked at her father, and read his countenance well enough to be sure that he was desirous not to be asked any questions; and, with a somewhat trembling heart, she also rode on by the side of the mayor. The soldier seemed disposed to dispute the order he had received; but judging wisely that he could gain nothing by opposition, obeyed.

"Duchenier," said De Beaurepaire, "the case is this:—I have learnt, no matter how, that that villain Santerre has sent forward six marksmen on the road to pick us four off—you, La Force, too—and then to carry back my daughter. They are to seize all papers found on our persons: and thus Santerre hopes to get possession of the paper I made him sign, and to silence all those that were witnesses to his having signed it. But they have express orders not to injure my daughter in any way. Now, my belief is, that they will fire upon us from behind some bushes, or something of that kind. I therefore propose to let the ladies ride on first, ourselves keeping some little distance behind. This will oblige the marksmen to shew themselves, and to stop them. We shall then, if we can, shoot them down; at all events, it is our best chance. We have all guns but you, La Force; we ought to be able to make sure of three of them. I do not think we can all hope to come off with life; but two, or at least one of us, may expect to do so. Whoever survives will conduct my daughter and the others to Thouars."

"But are you sure—are you quite sure," inquired Charles Duchenier, anxiously, "that you are not exposing Marie to danger?"

"Most positively certain," replied her father. "I have thought the plan over a hundred times; and I am sure it is the only one which can give us a chance. If we all ride on together, we shall be quietly picked off, and she will be carried back to La Flêche,—and we know what that means. I would rather, ten times, see her shot down before my very

eyes than that she should again fall into Santerre's power. Now, La Force, will you stand by us?"

"Undoubtedly, monsieur. But what am I to do? I have only pistols; and they, without question, will fire before we come near enough for pistol-shot."

"Nothing was said about M. le Grand, was there?" inquired Duchenier.

"Nothing about him, or his daughter," answered De Beaurepaire; "because Santerre had despatched this party before we demanded their liberation."

"Then call back the mayor," said Charles; "he shewed himself to be a man of courage to-day. Give him a couple of pistols, and tell him of the danger. They will probably not shoot him; but will suppose he is to be taken back as a prisoner; so they will only stop his horse, and he, in return, must pull his trigger."

"And, La Force," said Texier, "take my gun; I will ride on in front. They will fire at me, but they may miss me; or, if they don't, I may be only wounded, and I shall be within pistol-shot."

"You are a noble fellow, Texier," said Duchenier. "Ride on, and send the mayor back. But stay: what do you mean to do with this fellow whom Santerre sent with us?"

"To send him back when we get a little further," answered De Beaurepaire, "bidding him to tell Santerre that we have discovered his plans, and will not return his paper till we have escaped them. I would send him at once, but we are not far enough from the town. There is no saying what Santerre would do, should we drive him to desperation. Now, Texier, ride on."

Le Grand came back, heard the danger in which he stood, and shewed himself equal to it. "You shall find, messieurs," he said, "this day, that a civic functionary has his honour as well as military personages. His honour, messieurs," he was proceeding, for he had got on a subject on which it was his custom to dilate, "his honour is as precious to him ——"

"Yes, yes, monsieur," said Duchenier, somewhat hastily, "we know all that; but we are pressed, you will observe, for time, and we may fall into the ambush at any moment."

"I reserve to myself, monsieur, the right of making any observations on your brusqueness at a future time," replied the mayor, with what he would have called *l'air grand*. "At present, I shall ride on;" which he did accordingly.

"We are safe, I think, for the present," said De Beaurepaire; for the road now came out on a wide common, without a bush or tree. "Nevertheless, we may as well unsling our guns." This was done, and the party rode on at a fast trot. The arrangement was this: Texier occupied the extreme right of the first division; next to him was Marie de Beaurepaire; on her left rode Le Grand; and on his left, again, Rose. Some ten yards behind them came the dragoon, and at somewhat a greater distance from him the rear-guard,—Duchenier to the right, La Force in the middle, De Beaurepaire to the left. Thus they rode for about three quarters of a mile, till the common gave signs of coming to an end. About a quarter of a mile further on, a hedge appeared to terminate it, and to separate it from the cultivated land. Duchenier noticed it. "They will be there, M. de Beaurepaire," said he.

"There, or at the side of the road further on," he answered. "Halt!"

The party reined-in their horses.

"Now, M. le Dragon," continued De Beaurepaire, "you will return to General Santerre, and tell him that I have discovered his villany; and that therefore, till I have escaped it, I shall not dream of returning the paper for which he sent you. Begone, sir, or you will repent it."

"This is what you call aristocratic honour," said the fellow, with a sneer.

"Don't provoke me, sirrah!" answered Beaurepaire. "Remember, we are all armed. Ride home at once."

The man appeared disposed to disobey; but a sudden motion of Duchenier's hand to his pistol brought him to reason. He turned round, and rode slowly homewards.

"Now then, forward!" cried De Beaurepaire.

The party accordingly proceeded at a brisk trot, the ladies' horses cantering, till they approached the hedge. Duchenier's eye ran along it, but he could perceive no trace of any thing like soldiers or horses; and the road now lay between unen-

closed fields. The corn was not sufficiently high to offer the smallest obstruction to the sight, and they pressed onward for five minutes. Then the road turned slightly to the right, and, at the distance of fifty yards before them, an old and apparently deserted barn stood on the left hand.

"Now, then, for it!" cried Duchenier. "There cannot be a doubt that this will be the place. Let me change places with you, M. de Beaurepaire."

"No," replied that gentleman; "best keep as we are."

"Look!" cried Duchenier, "look! I am sure I saw something at the barn-door!"

The van of the little party was now almost even with it. At that moment, six dragoons rode out, with "Halt! you are prisoners!" The words were scarcely spoken before Texier shot one of the assailants through the head. Duchenier, La Force, and De Beaurepaire reined-in their horses, and fired together, wounded one of the dragoons, and killed two. The mayor had not been behindhand in good will; but, from his want of use in the weapon he held, had been collared and thrown from his horse by one of the dragoons. The two that remained unwounded rode off at full speed towards Baugé; turned at thirty yards, took aim at De Beaurepaire and Duchenier, and fired. The cap of the latter was pierced, and the former received a slight scratch on his arm; and the dragoons, finding their enterprise fruitless, put spurs to their horses, and rode off.

The wounded dragoon was raised, and found to be but slightly hurt. De Beaurepaire gave into his hands the paper, requested him to return it to Santerre, and to inform that general of the bad success of his villany; and the man, who had no hopes that his life would be spared, undertook to do so.

As soon as he was gone, all was joyful confusion. There was so much to be talked over, so much to be settled, so many inquiries on both sides, that it was not till Marie had inquired how soon they might expect to be with their friends, that M. de Beaurepaire remembered to inform her of the deception that he had practised on her captors. It cannot be denied that this information considerably damped the spirits

of some of the party. It was so likely that at Baugé, through which they must pass, the trick would have been discovered; so possible that they might meet some body of republican force marching northward. De Beaurepaire laughed at these suggestions. "We are more likely," said he, "to be overtaken by some of the Blues than to meet them. They are pouring in all the forces they can spare, and more than they can spare, on La Vendée; and as to the good people of Baugé, why, they may discover the trick or not, as they please. I would not give a rush one way or the other. Nevertheless, I think we had better ride forward as fast as may be."

The order was now somewhat changed. Texier and La Force rode first, the fidelity of the latter being by this time considered secure; Duchenier and Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire came next; and Rose rode between M. de Beaurepaire and her father in the rear.

"Dearest Marie," said Charles, when they had proceeded a little way in silence, "do you remember what you promised me three nights ago,—and it almost seems to be three months, —that last evening when we were together in the winter-parlour?"

"What, Charles?" asked Marie, looking a little conscious, however.

"That if ever, dearest, your father should give me leave to claim you as my own, you would not hesitate to give yourself to me. You remember saying so?"

"I believe," answered Marie de Beaurepaire, half-smiling and blushing, "that I did say so."

"And when I asked it," replied Charles, "I had no idea that I should be able to claim that promise for months,—perhaps not ever. But now the case is altered. Your father told me, when I had determined to track you to Paris myself, and he thought that his best hope of regaining you lay in not accompanying me,—may I tell you what he said, dearest one?"

"Oh, yes, you may tell me," answered Marie, gaily.

"He charged me with a message to you, which I promised to give. He said that if I were happy enough to rescue you, he wished, as soon as ever an *insermenté* priest could be found,

that you should give me a better right to take care of you than that of a lover. Now, what he thought almost necessary then, I am sure there is equal necessity for now. Will you let me speak to him again on this? I do not think I am selfish in wishing it. I know well that I may fall any day, any hour, in these wars; but I believe that, if GOD so orders it, you would rather ——" He paused, as if at a loss how to express himself.

"Charles," she replied, "it is so. I know what you mean: you mean, that in that case—which our kind Lady forbid! —I would rather be left your widow, than one who, in the eyes of the world, had no nearness of claim to grieve for your loss: I would ten thousand times rather that it were so. If you can get my father's consent to the plan you propose, you need not ask mine."

"Thank you, dearest one, a thousand times, for what you have said; I will speak to M. de Beaurepaire presently. But now we must ride carefully, for there is the town of Baugé, where they are stanch blues.—Texier, I will thank you to ride on Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire's other side.—La Force, you may be able to help us, by speaking them fair, should there be any disposition to attack us."

"I will try, monsieur," answered he.

It fortunately happened to be nearly twelve o'clock, and almost every one in Baugé was at dinner. Thus they were two-thirds of the way through the town before the landlord of the *Perche*, who was the chief leader and mover of the republican party in the place, had received intimation of their approach. As they gained the southern end of the town, one or two of the inhabitants looked out of their windows and doors, and remarks were interchanged which seemed to shew that the scheme had been discovered.

"Do the rebels dine here?" shouted the butcher.

"How many more places have they taken since you were here, you old scoundrel?" cried the *épicier*.

"When Santerre catches you, he'll find means to make you smart for it," shouted a third fellow.

"You see, dearest, they dare not touch us; and we must not mind a few hard words."

"How *could* you devise such a plan?" asked Marie.

"It was not mine," replied her lover; "it was your father's. I thought it desperate at first; but he managed it with wonderful skill—both that and the manner in which he treated Santerre. We had no difficulty except in this town; and you see, thank GOD, we are now almost clear of it again."

"Where shall we rest the horses, Charles?" cried De Beaurepaire from behind, as the road again lay through the quiet fields.

"Might we venture Beaufort?" inquired Duchenier.

"Better not, I think; Les Rosiers is not much farther, and we know the people."

"Oh, they will hold out till then," cried Duchenier; and he went on talking to Marie. At length, "Now," he said, "dearest, I must talk a little to your father; Texier shall take my place.—M. de Beaurepaire, may I have a few words with you?"

De Beaurepaire consented, and the two fell back a little.

"Now, monsieur," said Charles, "you remember what you charged me to tell your daughter, in case I should be fortunate enough to rescue her at Paris; do you still hold to that wish? I tell you freely that I have mentioned it to her, and the matter now rests with you."

"Let us reach Thouars," said De Beaurepaire, "and she shall be yours as soon as the priest can be found. When I gave you that message, I was in greater distress than, I hope, I ever shall be again; but that does not alter the case."

Charles Duchenier thanked M. de Beaurepaire with more fervency than fluency; for his heart was too full for words. Indeed, both of them were so occupied with their own thoughts, that it was Texier who, some ten minutes afterwards, cried out, "Messieurs, look behind you!"

They turned their heads, and a cloud of dust told but too plainly that a body of horse was on the road.

"We are pursued!" cried Charles; "it must be from those villains at Baugé. Let me be by Marie."

"I will be in the rear with Texier," said De Beaurepaire.

"La Force, you shall be by me, too. M. le Grand, you and your daughter must ride."

And they did ride. The rough pavé clattered beneath the hoofs of the seven horses; and many an anxious eye was cast backwards, to judge if the pursuers gained.

"Don't look behind you, Marie," cried Charles, as her horse stumbled; "you must take care of your horse,—a fall would be the end of the matter."

"But do you think they are gaining?"

"Not very much; and if we can but keep them behind half an hour, we shall be at Les Rosiers."

"Are we safe there?"

"Safe against any except a regular organised force; and if we can manage to cross the river, they will not be able to get their horses over, because there is but one barge."

Ten minutes more, however, served to put it out of doubt that the pursuers were gaining. They seemed to be in number about twenty, and were not all soldiers, though Duchenier thought that some were. Both parties held on; the road was as straight as an arrow—not a hedge, bush, or tree to intercept the view; it was a pure trial of speed, and a trial between fresh and wearied horses. De Beaurepaire gave himself and his daughter up for lost; but he only said, "Well, Texier?"

"It is up with us, monsieur, I think. We have made a good fight for it, and no one can do more. But I almost hope we may save Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire."

"How?"

"If you, monsieur, and I, and La Force throw ourselves in the way, we can keep them at bay for a few minutes. Or, M. Duchenier might stand with us, and you ride."

"No, no," cried De Beaurepaire. "I have had a good taste of life; and I ought to be content to walk off the stage. What do you mean to do, La Force?"

"Fight to the last," he said. "The guillotine would be far too good for me, if Santerre were to get me in his clutches."

"And the mayor and his daughter will probably shift with the others. They are gaining pretty fast."

"So they are, monsieur. They will be within pistol-shot in five minutes."

"Well, Texier, a man can die but once."

"No, monsieur; so he die well then—that is the thing."

And now the road, rising a little, gained the summit of a hill; and at its foot, to the unspeakable joy of the pursued, rolled the broad Loire, while the spire of Les Rosiers glittered brightly by the side of the great river.

"Duchenier," said De Beaurepaire, "listen to what I say. You and M. le Grand must take care of my daughter and the other young lady. We turn and face these men."

"I will not leave you," said Duchenier. "M. le Grand will be sufficient escort; but I trust you will ride forward yourself."

"Charles," cried De Beaurepaire, "if you fail my daughter now, my curse be on you! I shall certainly turn; if you turn with me, I shall look on you as a mean and pitiful scoundrel to desert a girl, whose heart you have won, at the moment she most needs you."

"I obey, M. de Beaurepaire," answered Duchenier. "But take notice, gentlemen, it is by compulsion."

This conversation, though by no means carried on in an under-voice, was not intelligible to Marie and Rose, whose light weight and comparatively fresh horses gave them an advantage in this race for life and death. They understood its sense, however; and Marie, turning her head, called her lover. He was at her side in a moment; and, in the rapid whirl of this flight, a few brief words were interchanged, audible to no ears but their own.

The road was rough and stony, and the hill that sloped towards the Loire of considerable steepness. The fugitives were about half-way down it when their pursuers appeared on the bend, and began to descend as furiously as those had done whom they were following. But the same speed was not attended with the same safety. An officer who rode in front, and who seemed by his eagerness and his gestures to be the leader of the party, was too intent on the pursuit to look well to his horse's feet; the beast stepped on a rolling stone, and in a moment came to the ground with extreme violence,

crushing his rider's leg in his fall. The party were so close together, that the two or three horses immediately behind the unfortunate officer went down over him; one or two more were thrown back on their haunches, and the confusion caused a sudden halt; those who had spurred past the fallen man almost unconsciously returning to render their assistance.

"On! on!" shouted Duchenier; "we may all cross! Look, the ferry is close to this side, and the man is unmooring it!" And raising his voice, with a prodigious effort of strength, he shouted, "Over!"

The boatman evidently understood; for he took off his hat and waved it, then replaced it on his head, and beckoned to the fliers. Then he, with his companion, stood at the head of the boat, and at the top of the steps intended for the descent of horses into it. Each held his long heavy punt in his hand, keeping the boat close to the beach, but ready to push it off the moment they should have received their freight. One standing on one side, and one on the other, seemed to intend that the Vendeans should pass between them, without losing a second.

"Now, Marie," cried Charles Duchenier, "all depends on ourselves. You and Mademoiselle le Grand must ride into the boat without dismounting. I will do the same. The rest must leave their horses on this side; for there would not be room for all; and it is essentially necessary but to have three. You see there is no other boat, so that those who are on foot on the other side will still be perfectly safe. I will go first; your horses will follow mine the more easily."

"Right, right, Charles!" cried De Beaurepaire from behind. "Texier and La Force, throw yourselves from your horses as soon as ever they are on the beach."

"They will fire," said Texier.

"And pretty unsteady hands they will have," said De Beaurepaire.

About two seconds more passed, during which the distance between the two parties held at about three hundred yards. The Vendeans were now close on the Loire. Duchenier spurred on in front; and conquering the resistance of his horse, forced him on board the ferry, and instantly dismount-

ing, was ready to seize the bridle of Marie's steed, as, with some hesitation, she endeavoured to follow. Rose, who was unused to riding, and who was mounted on an animal less properly trained, was nearly thrown from it in getting it on board: but De Beaurepaire, Texier, and La Force were now dismounted and by her side, and they contrived to force it in without any accident. Then, it took but a moment for the whole party to follow, and for the men to push off; so that the republicans were full a hundred yards from the shore when the boat was fairly afloat.

"You must get down, dear Marie," said Duchenier, assisting her; "you must get down, Mademoiselle le Grand, and crouch here out of the way of the horses, in case those fellows should fire."

"Better get, all of you, on this side the horses, and make them a screen," said the boatman. "Aha, monsieur! that was a clever trick you played yesterday; and I suppose the villains have found you out. I guessed how it was, when I saw you first over the brow of the hill; at all events, says I to Pierre here, the boat shall be ready, in case of the worst."

"We owe you more than we can ever repay," replied De Beaurepaire. "But what mean you to do with yourselves?"

Before the question could be answered, the republican soldiers were on the beach. "Stop, boatman!" roared a young man at their head; "stop, or we fire! Those persons are royalists and brigands; carry them over at your peril!"

"Stretch to it, Pierre," said the boatman. And the long sweeps seemed to plough up the water with more than human force.

"Lie to; or we fire!" shouted the officer; the great heavy boat making but slow way. The sweeps gave a couple of strokes more, and then from the shore came the command—"Fire!" Instantly a volley was poured in on the devoted ferry. The boatmen, however, and Vendeans, were so well screened, partly by the massy seat that divided the place appropriated to the horses from that designed for passengers, partly by the horses themselves, that they re-

ceived not the slightest injury. But the horses, one mortally and one severely wounded, reared, plunged, and kicked, with frightful violence. Texier and Duchenier were among them, and, assisted by La Force, contrived to master the animal that was not hurt, and that which was dying; the other struggled so violently, that, taking advantage of his rearing up, Duchenier forced the curb back upon his mouth, and, with one of those fearful screams that horses can utter, he fell into the river. A second volley was poured in at less advantage, but to more effect. The dying horse was killed—the unhurt one wounded; and Texier felt a sensation in his arm as if a hot iron had been passed from shoulder to elbow. The ball, however, that passed him did no other harm, and the boatman said, "That is about over."

And so, in truth, it proved. The ferry had now the advantage of the current; and, the shots that, for the third time, were poured on it, were well nigh spent. Scarcely any one of the party, however (Marie and Rose excepted), but received some slight hurt; a hurt that scarcely did more than remind them what a fearful danger they had escaped.

"Where can they cross?" demanded De Beaurepaire.

"They must go round, monsieur, either by Angers or Saumur," replied the boatman: "there is no bridge between them; and there is no other ferry."

"Oh! then we are safe enough," cried Duchenier. "But, my good fellows, you can never return to Les Rosiers."

"Very true, monsieur," answered the man: "we must even along with you. We had made up our minds to it before; for we cannot sit still any longer in these times. The man that won't strike a blow for the good cause when he might, is almost as much a scoundrel, to my mind, as if he struck one for the bad."

"That's true," answered Duchenier; "and I am very glad to hear you say so."

"It may be true," said De Beaurepaire, "but it does not lessen my obligation to you, my good friends; and if I live to reach the camp, I will shew you that it has not diminished my gratitude."

"Oh! never talk of that, monsieur!" cried the fisherman,

"Only give us the means of getting a gun each, and we shall ask nothing more. Look! they have made up their minds to try Angers; for they are riding on that way."

"So I see," replied Charles. "Marie, dearest, the danger is quite over: you may rise whenever you like."

Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire instantly rose, and her fair companion followed her example. A hurried consultation followed, as to what was next to be done; for the party were still twenty miles from the Vendean head-quarters.

"My advice is this," said Duchenier. "Let us wait here a few moments till we can be sure that our friends yonder are oo far on their way to notice what is done: then some of us can put over again, and endeavour to secure the four horses we turned adrift. On two of these we can mount the ladies, and two of us can ride forward with them. The others must provide themselves as best they can; at all events, if they can do no better, they can walk."

"Oh, no, Charles!" cried Marie. "You must not think of it. We can well walk till horses can be provided for us. You must not run into danger so very needlessly."

"Nonsense, child," replied her father. "The plan is an excellent one; and time is every thing to us now. There is no danger in the world."

"Indeed there is not, Marie," said Charles. "We will but wait till the party are over that hill, and then cross."

CHAPTER VII.

It was a glorious evening in spring. The sun was just on the very verge of the horizon; there was that delicate tint of green around the place of his setting, that seems to prove how earth cannot adorn herself with any one tint which may not be more beautifully displayed in heaven; the breeze, which had been brisk all day, was now dying into silence; there was the sweet smell of the new hay, of the young honeysuckles, and the maythorn; every thing, except the hearts of men, was at peace.

In the old-fashioned garden of a venerable house in La Chateignerie, where the head-quarters of the Vendeans now were, Charles Duchenier and Marie de Beaurepaire were enjoying the evening hour, and the bright forecasts of love and hope. If we listen for a few moments to their conversation, we may learn what had befallen them since we left them on the banks of the Loire.

"So, dearest one," said Duchenier, "whatever sorrows we may still have to bear, we shall bear them henceforth together, and so lighten them by more than half. I am almost selfish enough to rejoice in the past, when it seems, under God, to have opened such a future."

"Yes, Charles," returned Marie; "it almost seems as if we were wrong thus to think of ourselves, when there is such a crisis at hand for all we hold dearest. But I am sure that when I am really and truly yours, you will not be the les willing to risk all for what you love, or ought to love, better than me—our Church and our King."

"I trust not, I trust not, Marie; it would be sad indeed if it were so. But let us talk a little more of to-morrow. This Bishop of Agra, whose coming has given our troops so much confidence, will willingly officiate. One could hardly

have looked, when we seem so utterly forsaken by all, for episcopal benediction on our marriage."

"We could not," replied Marie. "And yet, Charles, there is something about the Bishop of Agra—GOD forgive me if I do him injustice—which I do not like."

"How so?" inquired Duchenier.

"He always seems to me," pursued Marie, "to be acting a part; and I have once or twice heard him say things which perhaps he did not intend to convey that impression, but which certainly, so far as words and manner went, gave the idea that, in circumstances like ours, the end justified the means. Now, when one looks on the beautiful faith of our peasantry, who are so well assured that, if they only do right, GOD's blessing will be upon them, it is most saddening to think of any less pure motive of action being introduced amongst them, by him especially, whose business it is to teach and to guide them."

"Perhaps there may be something in what you say, dear Marie; but I trust it is the bishop's manner more than any thing else. I left your father with him just now: he was very busy in settling every thing for to-morrow."

"Oh, yes!" said Marie, half-smilingly, and yet mournfully; "my poor father cannot bear that the matter should pass over, as I should prefer it, quietly. He cannot yet imagine himself elsewhere than at Cerisay: and there, you know, to-morrow would have been a day to be remembered by the poor for years to come."

"Well, it is very natural," replied Duchenier. "And, ceremony or no cerenomy, so I have but you, I care not a straw, except for your sake. But indeed, dearest one, you must be prepared for a good deal of notoriety; for I know that Cathelineau, and D'Elbée, and Marigny, and the other leaders, mean to ask leave to be present."

"Do not think that I have any silly wish to keep the matter needlessly quiet," said Marie: "and for your sake, I cannot but be glad to hear that they do mean to be present, because I well know the reason of their wish. But consider, Charles, I am not only motherless, but, excepting Rose, I have not a single female friend with me: and, in the very

midst of all these terrible preparations, there is something that sometimes makes my heart almost sink within me."

"I do not wonder at it—I cannot wonder at it, dear Marie. But I hope and trust that these sorrows and doubts may be but as for a moment, compared with the long bright years GOD may be pleased to give us with each other."

"I hope so, Charles, and can sometimes almost believe so. But look! here comes my father with M. de Lescure. You must let me go in—you must indeed; for I am not fit to meet them now." And Marie de Beaurepaire made her escape into the house.

"Good evening, Charles," said De Lescure, as he came forward with De Beaurepaire. "I am come to ask a favour of you and your fair bride—I may almost call her your bride now—which you will make me very happy, if you will grant."

"What is that, M. de Lescure?" inquired his friend. "If I can any how do it, you know well I shall only be too glad."

"You will be most anxious, I am sure, to place Mademoiselle de Beaurepaire in safety, as soon as possible after the wedding is over. M. de Beaurepaire tells me that you have not determined on your plans, and are yet undecided what place to choose for her. What I have to propose is this. You know that my own wife is at the Chateau de la Boulaye for the present; there cannot be a safer situation; and yet, on whatever side our army is attacked, it cannot be at a very great distance from her. If you will trust her to be a companion to your fair bride, till this insurrection, one way or the other, shall be decided, I am sure Victorine will do all in her power to cheer and to comfort her; and I shall be delighted to think that she has a friend, in my absence, whom she will, I am sure, learn to value so highly and to love so dearly."

"I will not waste words, M. de Lescure," replied Duchenier, "in trying to express how much I feel the kindness of your offer, nor how completely it is the very thing I could have wished; and I am sure I may say the same thing for Marie too.—I need hardly ask you, monsieur," he proceeded,

turning to De Beaurepaire, "what is your opinion of the propriety of our accepting M. de Lescure's truly kind proposal?"

"Indeed you need not, Charles. Circumstances being as they are, I could not even imagine an arrangement more calculated for my daughter's happiness."

"I had mentioned the affair to M. de Beaurepaire," proceeded De Lescure, "and he did me the honour to coincide in my view of the case. But I was going to say, would it not be better to carry your bride thither as soon as possible? The country now is thoroughly clear between here and Chatillon."

"In my opinion, Charles, better not lose a single hour," said De Beaurepaire. "The wedding—so we have arranged with the bishop—is to be at ten. If you contrived it well, you might arrive at La Boulaye before dusk; the distance can scarcely be twelve leagues."

"Not more than eleven, I think," said De Lescure. "And a messenger might be despatched early to-morrow morning, bidding them prepare all things for your reception."

"There is but one difficulty," replied Charles; "and that, if it be one at all, is so to the whole plan. I have promised Marie that, wherever it may be arranged that I take her, her friend Rose le Grand shall be with her. Her father, I understand, is set on returning, disguised, to Mirebeau, for the purpose of preserving some of his property; and, as it is impossible that Rose should go with him,—for his expedition altogether is somewhat harebrained,—she would be left altogether without a friend, did not Marie take compassion upon her."

"Not the slightest objection, my dear fellow, that I can see, in that," replied De Lescure. "There is room enough at La Boulaye for many more than it is likely to contain."

"Then," replied Charles, "I will joyfully go and acquaint Marie with the arrangement. All their little preparations must be made accordingly."

"Cerisay," said De Beaurepaire, "is as nearly as possible halfway between here and Chatillon. You might dine there, while you rest your horses for an hour or two."

"So we might," said Duchenier, going. "Good night, M. de Lescure, if I do not see you again; and pray accept my thanks once more for your great kindness." So saying, he betook himself into the house.

The sun rose most uncloudedly on the following morning. Though but the middle of May, the weather was as hot as July; so intensely sultry, indeed, that more than one weather-wise peasant gave it as his opinion, that there must be some sudden change. Towards half-past nine, the fair little church of Ste. Marguerite was almost full, for great interest was felt by the peasantry in the happiness of one whom they valued so highly as Duchenier. Many, who could not obtain admission into the edifice, clustered round the outside, and formed themselves, as the time drew nigh, into a sort of half-military line, extending from either side of the church-door almost as far as M. de Beaurepaire's temporary abode, which lay on the other side of the little Place Ste. Marguerite. The parlour of that gentleman was filled with the principal leaders of the insurrection, all eager to shew respect to Duchenier and—though in a less degree—to De Beaurepaire. The company were but waiting for the bride to make her appearance. The *soi-disant* Bishop of Agra was already at the church; and the chiefs were broken up into two or three little knots, discussing rather the prospects of the army than the occasion that had called them together. De Lescure, De Donnissan, De Beaurepaire, and Duchenier, were standing rather apart from the rest.

"Take a week, take a week, Charles," said the former. "To-morrow I trust we shall be in possession of Fontenay; and then the troops, I am very sure, will disband for a few days. So that if you are with us again in eight or nine days, you will be amply in time for whatever projects may by that period have been determined on."

"So it shall be, then," replied Duchenier. "I hope and trust that Fontenay will give you but little trouble; and—I am sure you will believe me—nothing less than such an engagement as this should have prevented my sharing that enterprise with you."

"We are certain of it, monsieur," said De Donnissan,

politely. "I trust that your journey will be accomplished without inconvenience."

At this moment, Marie, leaning on her father's arm, and accompanied by Rose, entered the room. The bridal procession was formed; and moving across the *Place* which we have already mentioned, it presently entered the nave of Ste. Marguerite. Forth came the bishop, a man of grave presence and commanding air, from the sacristy. The chiefs and soldiers formed around him, leaving Marie, De Beaurepaire, Rose, Charles, and D'Elbée—who was as much flattered by acting as bridesman as if he had obtained a grand cross—in the centre of the circle. Then was the solemn and yet simple rite performed—the troths plighted and the ring blessed; and then, advancing to the altar, the bishop, according to the rite of his church, said mass and blessed the marriage. As they came forth again from the holy walls, Marie Duchenier now leaning on her husband's arm, and followed by De Beaurepaire and Rose, the peasantry raised one long and joyful shout, and then permitted the bridal party to enter the house. De Beaurepaire soon found means of giving them, by Texier, wherewith to keep the day happily; and the Bishop of Agra having blessed the meal, the party sat down to their breakfast.

As soon as it seemed possible so to do, Duchenier gave orders for the heavy, lumbering coach which was to convey his bride, Rose, and himself to La Boulaye. Forth it came, its rich painting and gilding—for it had once belonged to a certain Count de la Chateignerie—contrasting strangely enough with the rope-harness and miserable horses. Texier, and five others from the parish of Cerisay, had vowed that they would not leave their young lady till they saw her in safety at La Boulaye, and were therefore now prepared to act as a sort of military escort to the carriage. All things being ready, and announcement made that they were so, De Beaurepaire folded his daughter in his arms with affection which would have considerably injured his character as a perfect gentleman, in the Versailles of his younger days. Rose took a leave not less tender of her father; and then both the fair girls fell on their knees before the bishop for his blessing. Duchenier,

meanwhile, was bidding the various chiefs farewell gaily and brightly; and then the whole party descended the broad staircase, and surrounded the carriage. The clumsy steps are let down, Marie enters; Rose follows, seating herself on the opposite side; and then Duchenier seats himself, with an apology to the latter, beside his wife. The escort draws up behind the carriage — adieus are waved — the peasantry shout — and the bridal party drives off. Our course is with them.

The heat of the weather and the sandy roads rendered the journey necessarily slow — at least, so thought Rose and the men who rode by the side; and when the party began to ascend the Gatines, the heavy carriage seemed scarcely to make any way at all. Duchenier alighted, and, walking by the side of the vehicle, now and then spoke to his bride, and sometimes addressed a passing observation to some one of the escort.

"Why, Texier," he said, "this weather is tremendously hot."

"You may say that, monsieur," replied the young peasant, drawing his hand across his forehead, and dashing it on to the ground. "I never remember such a day in May; and I think we shall have a storm before long. Look there, monsieur."

He pointed through one of the gaps to the right in the chain of downs that they were ascending; and Duchenier, following the direction of his hand, saw a closely-heaped bank of black clouds, with here and there a white fleece-like vapour piled upon them, coming up, as it seemed, from the horizon.

"I hope," said he, "we shall be at Boulaye before it comes on, for that will be a bad storm."

"At Boulaye, monsieur? If we are at Cerisay," replied Texier, "it will be as much as we are: they are coming up against the wind very fast."

"How far do you call it to Cerisay?" inquired Charles.

"They call it three leagues from the top of the hill," replied Texier, "and a good three leagues it is. But, on my word, monsieur, I never knew any thing like this before:

The higher one mounts, instead of finding a fine fresh breeze, the more sultry it becomes."

"I don't want you to distress the horses, *mes amis*," said Charles to the postilions as he re-entered the carriage, which was now nearly at the summit of the hill; "but the faster you can get on to Cerisay the better for us."

"And the better for us too, monsieur," said one of the men; "for there is a heavy storm brewing yonder; and, if we lose time, we shall be drenched to the skin."

"*Eh bien! courrez toujours!*" cried Duchenier; and the carriage proceeded at a pace at which it probably had never been driven before.

Meanwhile, as the afternoon advanced, the storm came up with fearful speed. The sun was shrouded in a red and lurid haze; and yet the heat seemed to increase. The big drops of sweat rolled off the horses—the soldiers every now and then raised their caps from their foreheads, as if courting some imaginary breeze—the dust, here and there, rose in whirls to the sky—the birds, in the wooded district through which the travellers were now passing, were profoundly silent—a death-like expectation of something dreadful seemed to have come over the face of nature. Rose felt depressed to a degree of faint-heartedness she had never before experienced. Sitting on the storm-side of the carriage, her eyes were fixed on the on-coming of the tempest; but her heart was with her father, who also, that same day, was to set forth on his perilous expedition. Marie might, perhaps, have felt the same depression, had she been situated as her friend; as it was, she crept closer to her husband, and every now and then interchanged with him a few sweet words of perfect affection. As to Charles Duchenier, he gave the storm no further consideration than in so far as it was likely to affect the comfort of his little escort, and might possibly prevent their reaching La Boulaye that night. They had calculated on being at Cerisay by two o'clock,—resting there a couple of hours, and so arriving at their destination by seven at the latest: but it was three before they began to descend the hill which overtopped the valley of Cerisay; and the horses seemed perfectly exhausted by the sultriness of the weather

and the heaviness of the road. The sky was now quite black overhead; still there was not a breath of wind, nor a drop of rain — every thing around, leaves, grass, and boughs, were as hush as at midnight. Just as they began to descend the hill, an intensely vivid flash of lightning, accompanied rather than followed by a tremendous peal of thunder, gave notice that the storm had commenced. It was a fortunate circumstance for the party that the horses were so weary; for, tired as they were, they gave manifest proofs of terror and restiveness. The beast on which one of the peasants was mounted, after rearing and plunging, took the bit between his teeth, and tore wildly down the hill. Down the same hill the postilions hurried, at a pace very far from their usual caution; and they had almost reached the Grange Neuve, which we have described in the second chapter of this history, when a second flash, still more brilliant than the first, and more simultaneously accompanied with the peal of thunder, urged them to still greater exertions.

"If this lasts, dearest," said Duchenier, "it will be absolutely impossible for us to go beyond Cerisay this afternoon. The horses will be perfectly unmanageable.—What are you about, sirrah?" he continued, looking out of the window, and speaking to one of the postilions; "don't beat that horse so; beating him will never cure him of his fright."

"Indeed, Madame Duchenier," said Rose,—it was the first time she had called her so,—"indeed, I think that it would be better to stop at your own chateau for to-night, if there is no danger from any party of the Blues."

"Not the slightest," said Charles,—"good heavens, what a flash!—not the slightest; and as they had notice down at the village from De Lescure's messenger, that we should dine there to-day, we shall doubtless find persons enough waiting for us at the chateau, so that we may make any arrangements we please."

It should be observed that, as soon as the successive captures of Thouars, Parthenay, and La Chateignerie, had thrown all that part of Poitou into the power of the Vendeans, M. de Beaurepaire had taken care that his chateau (which had suffered very little serious injury when stormed)

should be again put into habitable order, and tenanted by the housekeeper who had previously managed it, and the ordinary servants; so that when the postilions turned—we have already described the topography—to the right, and dashed up the avenue which led to the house, Duchenier was not astonished to see a large number of the peasantry crowding in and round the portico, foremost among whom was the spare figure of Father Laval. The carriage drew up, the steps were let down; Duchenier jumped out, and handed forth first his bride, and then Rose le Grand; and the whole party were forthwith received with that mixture of politeness and warm-heartedness which makes the hospitality of the French peasantry so delightful a thing. After replying to the questions that poured in upon them, and asking and receiving the news of the village, Charles and Marie followed Father Laval, who reminded the villagers that Madame Duchenier would probably feel tired.

"Tell them, Charles," said his bride, "to go into the kitchen. I dare say good old Madame le Brun will find something for their dinner."

"Ay, that I will," said the kind-hearted housekeeper, who had come forth to meet her young mistress in high stiff cap, pocketed apron, and Angevin boots—the very type of staidness and matronly respectability. "This way, madame—this way, mademoiselle. Father Laval thought—and so did I too—that you would prefer taking your dinner in the winter-parlour; it is not so comfortless as the rest of the house."

"You are never intending to proceed to La Boulaye to-night, my son?" inquired the good priest of Duchenier, as they mounted the stairs to the room in question.

"If the storm continues, certainly not," said Duchenier; "and certainly it looks not as if there were any chance of its ceasing." For now the rain had begun to pour down in torrents; and the thunder roared, and the lightning flashed, almost incessantly.

"You must not think of it," continued Father Laval. "The Sèvre, petty stream as it generally is in summer, would be too hazardous to attempt now without necessity.

No, no; you must not think of it. You will be as safe here as at La Boulaye."

So saying, the party entered the winter parlour. Father Laval was introduced to Rose: a brief conversation ensued on the expediency of not, that day, continuing the journey; and, finally, it was agreed not to attempt it. Orders were given that Texier and his companions, after attending to their horses, should take up their quarters in the house. The priest was invited to stay to dinner, which Madame le Brun declared had been ready long since: and Marie and Rose went to make some alteration in their dress previously to partaking of that meal. Left alone with Father Laval, Duchenier detailed to him the latest movements and the present intentions of the Vendean forces, respecting which the priest possessed no very authentic or satisfactory information; and at about four o'clock, the storm still giving no prospect of abating, the whole party sat down to dinner.

CHAPTER VIII.

We must now return to a personage who has lately occupied but little of our attention, and who is not likely, when he again claims it, to win much of our affection: I mean, the dragoon La Force. This personage, as the reader has already perceived, was by no means remarkable either for his courage or his truth; but he was a shrewd, clever man, who sacrificed every thing to his own interest, and was seldom wanting to himself in the power of furthering that. On arriving with the rest of the party at Thouars, on the evening after that perilous passage of the Loire which we detailed in the last chapter but one, La Force was accommodated with very good quarters, and the next morning was summoned into M. de Beaurepaire's presence. That gentleman, in the first place, made him a present of fifty louis d'or, being exactly double the sum that he, the said La Force, had expected to receive; and in the next, offered him a situation in the Vendean troops, if he chose to accept it.

The ex-dragoon expressed his gratitude in sufficiently polite language, but, at the same time, requested the delay of a day or two before he decided on serving against the army in which he had so lately been a soldier. De Beaurepaire, who imagined the man to be desirous of a decent time for changing sides, readily agreed; and during the attacks on Parthenay and Chateignerie, La Force attended him rather in the capacity of a military servant than in any other character. During all this time the dragoon was engaged in making very attentive, and, truth to say, very sufficiently able observations on the Vendean army, its component parts, and usual plan of operations; that he might be able with some degree of likelihood to augur as to its chances of final success. Had he come to the conclusion that there was a considerable prospect of this, he would have been glad to

embrace the service, because he could do it without danger; whereas any attempt to return to his original position must, unless extremely well managed, be attended with considerable risk. He gradually, however, came to the conclusion, that, though the struggle might be protracted, the numbers of the Convention troops must prevail at last; and some disorders which had occurred among the Vendeans—for the first time—on occupying Chateignerie, confirmed him in this resolution. All his endeavours were now turned towards enabling himself to return in such a manner to the national troops as to secure his own forgiveness and welcome.

A day or two preceding that which had been fixed for the marriage, La Force informed his master that, after duly considering his obliging proposition, he should be very happy to accept it; and De Beaurepaire communicated this answer to Cathelineau and one or two of the other chiefs, and added, that he was amply convinced of the fidelity of the man, if only on principles of self-interest. It was accordingly settled that, as a slight garrison was to be left in La Chateignerie, La Force should form one in it; as it was thought that he would be better calculated for this kind of service than for the guerilla warfare of the Vendeans.

It need hardly be said, that this worthy personage was only desirous of obtaining information of some important secret, with which he might ensure his safety on his return to the national troops. Circumstances favoured him sooner than he had anticipated. On the evening previous to the marriage, he learnt the intended route of the bridal party; and it instantly struck him, that if he could possess himself of the persons of two somewhat important prisoners, and could capture such an officer as Duchenier, towards whom the Convention had such particular reasons for feeling hatred, he might well purchase his pardon. At the same time, the plan must be executed before they could reach Chatillon; for Madame de Lescure, at La Boulaye, was surrounded by too strong a garrison to render any such attempt feasible, without a far larger body of men than La Force could hope to be able to collect.

The shortness of the notice somewhat discouraged him:

only twenty-four hours were to elapse before the party whom he proposed to attack would be out of his reach. Still, in twenty-four hours much might be done; and he proceeded, about dusk, to the *cabaret* of a man named Oncques, who was a violent Jacobin, and pretty well acquainted with the real feelings and wishes of La Force, though the latter had never committed himself by any open manifestation of them. He was fortunate enough to find his acquaintance at the door of his house, and requested a few moments' conversation with him on matters of importance.

"Well, we can take a stroll out," said Oncques. "We shall not be likely to be interrupted in the *Place*."

"No, no," replied La Force; "that would not do at all; they would suspect me, *mon ami*, if they saw us in such close companionship. Have you not some back room where we can chat for half an hour or so?"

"Yes," said the other, anticipating that the communication was of more importance than he had first believed; "step this way." And he led him into a kind of low back-parlour, with sanded floor and white-washed walls; the latter ornamented with some wretched prints of Robespierre, Danton, and Collot d'Herbois, as also with one of the murder of Louis XVI. Having produced from a cupboard a bottle of brandy and two glasses, Oncques seated himself on one side of the little round table that occupied the centre of the room, pointed to his visitor to take the opposite seat, poured out two glasses, and said, "Well?"

"Well," said La Force, "I must cut a long story short, and begin in the middle, for I have no great time for talking. I know very well, my good friend, that you have no fancy for these brigands ——"

"Why, you are one of them yourself," replied Oncques, with an inquiring look.

"So I am," answered the other; "so I am. Did you never hear say that there is reason in roasting of eggs?"

"There may be reason in roasting of eggs," said Oncques, "for I never saw any roasted; but I'll be hanged if I can understand what reason there can be in an honest man turning brigand."

"Why, if he can cheat the brigands, there may be very good reason," observed La Force. "But the long and the short of the matter is this: I have been forced into this service—no matter how—against my will; and I am desirous of getting back to my old place in the national troops."

"*La France et la gloire*, and all that sort of thing," said his friend.

"Exactly," returned La Force. "Well; if I go back poor Jacques La Force as I am, I shall chance to get my head into the little national window in a trice; and that I have no fancy for, I can promise you. But if I bring back something worth having, I shall not only get my own pardon for being obliged to do as I have done, but very likely promotion into the bargain. Now I have the chance of doing this, if I can get friends to help me, and at once; for it is more than I can manage of myself, and there is not time to run about and beat-up for recruits."

"Ay!" said the cabaretier. "And pray, what might these friends hope to get? They are not to work for nothing, I suppose?"

"You shall judge what they might hope to get. I will not tell you any thing, I will only put a case. Suppose that Colonel Duchenier up yonder were going to-morrow to marry old De Beaurepaire's daughter; suppose he were going to carry his bride home to Chatillon, which is quite a nest of brigands, for De Lescure's wife is there; suppose that other girl, the daughter of that Girondist fool Le Grand, at Mirebeau, were going with her; suppose that Santerre is enraged at letting those prisoners slip through his hands—you must have heard the joke how De Beaurepaire and Duchenier rode to La Flêche, and swore the whole royalist army were after them; —then suppose I with a few friends were to meet the ladies between here and Chatillon, and carry the whole party off together,—do you not think we might make what terms we liked?"

"Well," said Oncques, after a moment's pause, "I have heard of worse plans than that. But the mischief is, that the carriage they go in is pretty sure to have an escort."

"So it is," returned La Force, "and I know what the

escort will be, too; for a prattling fool called Texier, who comes from De Beaurepaire's village, told me all. There are but six of the peasants to ride with them; for they have not the least idea of danger."

"Are you sure?" inquired Oncques, rather suspiciously.

"Do you take me for a fool?" asked La Force. "Should I tell you a lie where my own making is concerned in speaking the truth?"

"Why," said the other, "the truth is, you have such a long head, *mon ami*, that you may be too much for a plain simple fellow like me," and he smiled grimly. "But there is something in what you say."

"Something? Every thing! Besides, look here; if you have any fear, when it comes to the point, about making terms with Santerre, you are pretty sure to be able to do so with De Beaurepaire."

"Well," said Oncques, "I'm your man. I suppose we shall want a dozen good fellows."

"Better, if you know so many," replied La Force. "But all depends on being quick."

"What time's the wedding?"

"Well,—they say ten. But we ought to be off as soon as the gates are opened—one by one—and not all by the same gate. Then we can meet at Pouzauge by eight or nine o'clock, and get over the hills to the woods between Cerisay and Chatillon. But all this you have to arrange between now and then, and horses to get too."

"You stay here," said Oncques, "till I come back. I must go round and knock up a few of my friends; we will have supper here, and then we can settle our plans."

"I will come back again," replied La Force, "at ten o'clock; but now I must go up to M. de Beaurepaire, for else they might be wondering where I am, and perhaps taking the liberty of inquiring which way I went. That would never do."

"And it is to be share and share alike, and upon honour?" said Oncques, as they went forth.

"Most certainly," answered La Force: and they separated on their different errands.

Oncques, who had a large and intimate acquaintance among the most abandoned characters of La Chateignerie, found no difficulty in prevailing on seven of his friends to join in the expedition. But by that time it was so late, that he thought it best to be content with what he had got; and during the supper that followed, La Force was duly introduced to his new friends, and the plan of operations for the next day was distinctly marked out. It was agreed that the messenger, who (as La Force had by this time wormed out of Texier) was to be despatched to La Boulaye at six o'clock the next morning, should be permitted to go on his journey; that the confederates should steal out of the town as they best might, and meet in Pouzauge towards nine or ten o'clock, at the inn called *Le Coq Brun;* and then proceed onwards to the place where they intended to take up their position.

Nothing occurred to disarrange this plan; and at about two o'clock on the following day, the parties concerned rode into a magnificent chesnut wood, lying on the east of the road from Cerisay to Chatillon, and about three miles from the former place. To any one else, the scene would have been most grand: the giant stems stretching away in innumerable cathedral-like vistas as far as eye could see; the tempered and green light; the solemn music of the leaves overhead; the presages, even in that shady retreat, of the coming storm; the quiet of the birds; the melancholy stillness, unbroken but by the more melancholy whispering of the branches;—all this, we say, to any one else would have been magnificent; but, of course, the ruffians with whom we are unfortunately compelled to keep company felt nothing of the beauty of the scene. They threw themselves from their horses; tethered them as best they might; and disposed themselves to pass a couple of hours in the way that most fell in with their views. Some went to sleep; one or two played at dice; one or two conversed together—if such talk as theirs can be called conversation; while Oncques and La Force, the acknowledged leaders of the party, held rather apart from the rest, and seemed more exclusively intent on the business in hand.

"Now, mind, Oncques," said La Force, "there must be no bloodshed, because it lessens our chance at the end: of

course I don't mean the peasants; the more of them that have their brains knocked out the better. And when once you have them, take care of the girls. You have but a wild set with you."

"Oh, never fear, never fear!" answered Oncques; "I know them, and they'll mind me. But don't you think we had better put a good big log in the road, or a trunk of a tree, or something of that sort, just to stop the carriage?"

"Why, no," said La Force, after thinking a moment; "we might stop some one whom we did not want, and we cannot miss those whom we do. It's very hot."

"And as dark as if it were seven o'clock. We shall have a storm."

He had scarcely spoken when, right over the forest, there burst that tremendous peal of which we have already spoken. The whole party sprang to their feet, some with the involuntary motion of alarm, some for the purpose of attending to their terrified horses.

"Well," said La Force at length, "that's unpleasant."

"Very unpleasant indeed," said one or two who seemed the most irresolute of the set.

"Pooh!" cried Oncques, with an oath, "is it that noise you mean?"

Again the peal was heard, and more than one face looked white. However, by the help of a few oaths, and a few sneers, and a few blasphemous jests, Oncques contrived to keep his men together till the pouring rain gave them some occupation in the way of finding the most convenient places of shelter.

Who does not know the effect of a deluge of rain in a deep, deep forest? the darkness below, the intense roar above, the leaves flitting through the air, the solemn stillness round the aged trunks? I do not mean when the arching branches no longer resist the storm, and every leaf drips, and the ground becomes a swamp; but the first onset of the tempest, while there is not a drop on the greensward, and the earth seems thirsting for the supplies that cannot reach it. For nearly half an hour La Force and his companions contemplated (or might have contemplated, had they so pleased) this scene; then gradually the raindrops worked their way through the

green vaulting, and began to drench in a very unpleasant manner those who were waiting below.

"Let us have some brandy," said Oncques at length, after vainly shifting his position several times; and he produced two monstrous flat bottles from his immense pockets. "Here's to our good success, comrades!" and he took a sufficient draught from the mouth of one of the bottles.

"Our good success," said La Force, doing the same; "and may it not be very long in coming!" The bottles were drained; and another half hour, miserably wet, and of great suspense, succeeded.

When it drew towards four o'clock both Oncques and La Force began to grow seriously uneasy. What if something had occurred to disarrange the intended journey? What if some one—and each villain thought of the other with suspicion—had divulged the plan? Still they kept their fears to themselves, for they were too good leaders to run the risk of discouraging their men.

"This is strange," said Oncques at last.

"Very strange," returned La Force. "I hope no one has peached."

"I don't think they have," replied Oncques, "because we should have had five hundred of the Whites after us before now. Perhaps the storm made them stop."

"They were to dine at Cerisay; perhaps they have stopped there for to-night."

"May be so," replied Oncques; and he seemed to be pondering over the affair for some minutes. At last, "I'll tell you what it is," he said, "La Force; either you or I must ride to Cerisay, and find out whether they ever came there. I care not a straw which it is; do you choose."

Had Oncques proposed to ride himself, La Force would probably have suspected treachery. As it was, he thought a moment, and then said, "You had better go. If I were to meet them, they would know me. We will wait here for your return."

"Hark ye, my lads," said Oncques; "I am going to see what is come of our game. I shall not be away more than an hour. Keep together, and mind what La Force says."

"There's no chance of their baulking us, is there?" asked one of the party.

"No, no, *mon ami;* but they ought to have been here before now, and they may be stopping yonder at Cerisay; in which case I don't want a night's watching in the woods." And he rode off.

La Force, as was natural, found the time pass uneasily enough; but still he could not complain that he was kept waiting. For in about three quarters of an hour, that is to say at about five o'clock, a horse was heard on the Cerisay road; and the dragoon looking out cautiously, soon discovered his friend.

"It is well I went, La Force; it is well I went, comrades," said he, as he rode into the wood; "they sleep at the chateau at Cerisay."

"How did you find it out?" inquired La Force.

"Why, I went straight there, and professed to be a messenger from La Boulaye. And so they gave me a letter for De Lescure's wife; which I don't think will ever reach her."

"Let's hear it! let's hear it!" shouted more than one voice.

It was accordingly torn open and read, but afforded the auditors very little amusement or information, as it contained nothing more than a regret that the storm prevented the bridal party from leaving Cerisay that night; but that, weather permitting, they should hope to reach La Boulaye by two o'clock on the following day.

"And now," said La Force, "the question is, What's to be done?"

"There are but two things we can do," observed Oncques. "The one is, to waylay them as they pass here to-morrow; the other, to take them in that chateau to-night. What say you, La Force?"

"Why," replied the personage addressed, "I presume all these gentlemen are pretty much of my opinion, that it will be better not to spend a night in these woods if it can be avoided. But we ought to know how many persons we are likely to find in the chateau, if we make any attempt upon it. There are not so many of us, you know."

"There will be the escort, that is six," answered Oncques; "Colonel Duchenier; one servant, who lives in the house; and two postilions; that is ten;—but I am sure that none of the Cerisay people will be there; because I heard, when I was in the kitchen, that there was some difficulty about finding room for as many as I have said."

"Let us go to the chateau! let us go to the chateau!" cried more than one voice. "Any thing is better than being drowned here."

"I think so too," said La Force; "I can be of use to you there, for I was there when De Cailly carried the place the week before last."

"Very good," cried Oncques; "but we must let it get dark before we ride to it. And just now, all the parish of Cerisay are there. Nothing to be done just yet. I think, towards nine o'clock will be our time."

"And a precious long time it is like to be," grumbled one of the ruffians. "Hang me if I think I will wait so long!"

"Why, you did not fancy I was going to leave you without something to warm you?" cried Oncques. And he drew his two flat bottles forth, and shewed that they had been very satisfactorily replenished.

CHAPTER IX.

It drew towards ten o'clock. The storm had ceased about sunset; the big rock-like clouds had given way to one unvaried covering of grey vapour; the violent rain and thunder had died away in a thin penetrating mist-like shower; and this weather still continued, as if to replace force by pertinacity. The bursts of merriment from the rambling old kitchen came fainter and further between; for one by one the peasants were dropping homewards; and neither the excellence of the wine, nor the excitement of the military talk of the escort, nor the kindness and hearty good-will of Madame le Brun, could detain the cottagers of Cerisay beyond that, for them, unprecedentedly late hour of the night.

"Well, my children," said Father Laval, rising, "I must wish you good night. I will come up early in the morning; for it may be long before we meet again."

"Oh, you will come up to breakfast, of course," said Marie; "I am only sorry that you should have to return in such a wet night."

"Oh, my cassock is used to worse rain than this," said the good father, "and I ought to be back, for I have a sick child to look in upon, or at least to inquire after, before I go to bed. You look sufficiently comfortable, I must say, if I had not that duty, to make me willing to stop a few minutes longer with you."

And the priest said but the truth. The winter-parlour was not very large; not larger than a party of three or four might occupy without feeling themselves lost in it. A small, a very small wood fire was burning on the old dogs; for at nightfall the intense heat of the weather had given way to a damp and chilly rawness. At one side of the fire sat Marie, in a low cane arm-chair, striving in vain to make herself feel

at home in her own house with the strange consciousness that her husband was at her side, and that henceforth, in resting or in wandering, his home must be hers also. On her right hand, one arm thrown over the back of her chair, was Charles Duchenier, too happy to heed any thing except his bride, and, if the truth must be spoken, not taking a particularly brilliant part in the conversation. Then came Father Laval, with his usual expression of half-happy, half-sorrowful calmness. And at his right, and in the opposite corner of the fireplace to that occupied by Marie, sat Rose, happy in the happiness of others, though sometimes musing sadly on the dangers of her father, and her own condition, severed so far, and, as it seemed, so hopelessly, from the home and from the friends of her youth.

"You will be with us, then, to-morrow, father," inquired Marie, "and as early as may be?"

"I will, my daughter; for GOD knows when we may meet again.—M. Duchenier, if you feel the slightest apprehensions that the chateau is insecure for these ladies, it will be very easy, I doubt not, to send you up a dozen of stout fellows from the village, late as it is."

"Oh, no, father; there can be no possible ground for apprehension; and I am sure I should be the first to discover it, if there were. I should only like to see the Blue that would dare to shew himself within five miles of us."

"I should not at all, Charles," said Marie, smiling.

"Nor I," said father Laval. "Well,—good night, my children; our good Lady watch over you all." And he left the room, Charles Duchenier accompanying him to the door.

"Dear Rose," said Marie, as they were thus left alone for a few moments, "I fear we have let you feel too much of a stranger here to-night. I know how strange every thing must seem to you."

"Oh, no, you have not," answered Rose. "It does, indeed, seem strange, this change of circumstances; and so, I think, it must do to you."

"Yes," said Marie; "think of our companionship that dreadful night at Saumur, not a fortnight ago; and what have we not to be thankful for now!"

"What, indeed!" returned her fair companion. "I could almost wish, though, that we had been able to reach La Boulaye. These rapid changes, and the dangers we have gone through, make me a very coward."

"Nay, nay, Rose, that you never were, and I do not think ever will be. I, too, could have wished it, had it been possible; but I am sure Charles acted wisely."

"I intended, at least, to do so," said Duchenier, who at that moment entered the room. "It is a dreadful night still,—the rain seems to me heavier than it was,—and if we had not been able to cross the Sèvre, we should have found ourselves in a very unpleasant position indeed."

"But if this weather should continue?" inquired Marie.

"Oh, there is no chance of that. Besides, if it should, we must go round by Chatillon—that is all: only there would not have been time for that this afternoon."

"I am very glad that Madame de Lescure knows where we are," said Marie; "it may save her some uneasiness, and her household some sitting up."

"Yes; it was very thoughtful in her to send. I only wonder she thought of sending so soon.—Come in," he added, as a knock was heard at the door.

Texier entered.

"Monsieur," he said, "the messenger from La Boulaye has come back again: he cannot cross the Sèvre; and he asked me which was the best inn up at the village. But I thought that you would, perhaps, hardly like to send him away, as the night is so bad."

"What say you, dearest?" said Duchenier, smiling; "the house is not mine, you know."

"Oh, let him sleep here, by all means," replied Marie.

"Remember, Texier," said Duchenier, "we know nothing of the man, though I dare say he is an honest fellow enough: best have him put where he can do no harm." And with a "Yes, monsieur," Texier left the room.

Some few minutes afterwards the door opened, and Madame le Brun made her appearance, followed by a servant with cake and wine. "I thought, madame," she said, "that you and mademoiselle would not be the worse for some-

thing to take. I am sure you have had fatigue enough to-day."

"Oh, thank you, Le Brun," answered Marie. "You shall take a glass of wine with us yourself."

"That I will with pleasure, madame,"—and Charles gave her one. "Many happy returns of the day," said the old lady, setting it down. "All the men are on the ground floor, monsieur, except the young man from La Boulaye, whom I have put up on this side, out of the way; and the house is carefully locked up; for ever since that night we have been very particular."

"And quite right, Madame le Brun," replied Duchenier; "though there is not the slightest cause for apprehension now. Mademoiselle le Grand, you must let me give you some wine."

"Just listen to the rain, Charles," said Marie, as it swept against the windows. "Poor Father Laval must have had a miserable walk back."

So the party sat conversing for about a quarter of an hour longer. Madame le Brun again made her appearance with lights, and escorted the young ladies to their respective apartments; and Charles Duchenier was left alone.

We must now return to the ruffians whom we left in the chesnut wood. By eight o'clock it was duskish, owing to the clouds and rain; and riding out, in miserable plight, from their retreat, they followed the guidance of La Force. Anxious to avoid Cerisay, he led them by the high road to La Grange Neuve; then, turning sharp to the right, he brought them up the hill where De Cailly's troop had thrown the Vendeans into disorder; but, instead of coming up as far as the gate of the avenue, he cut off across the fields, and directing his party to leave their horses in a shed belonging to some outhouses a little way to the east of the chateau, he led them stealthily on, through the shrubberies, and behind the laurel-hedges that skirted the flower-beds, till they were at a distance of not more than a hundred yards from the house itself. By this time it was as dark as it was likely to be,—for it was past nine,—and lights were seen in several of the rooms of the chateau. Nearest and brightest was that

in the winter-parlour, which, as the reader will remember, looked towards Bressuire, and consequently faced east. In the back part of the other wing of the house,—which was the housekeeper's room,—there was a steady light; and in one or two of the bedrooms there was an unsteady flickering blaze, as if a fire had been kindled to air them for their unexpected visitors.

Chilled to the very heart with their long exposure to the rain, the party with La Force and Oncques, under the shelter of a laurel-hedge, made their observations on what lay before them. Every now and then a boisterous shout of merriment came from the kitchen and the servants' hall; and once or twice Oncques, the most accustomed among the party to listen for such sounds, fancied he might detect voices in the room nearest to him, the winter-parlour.

"I'll tell you what, La Force," said Oncques in a whisper, "this matter will not be over-safe. We must not delay so long as on other accounts we ought to do, because else we shall not get them clear off before daylight. As soon as ever those riotous fools, whom I take to be the party that came with Duchenier, are quiet, we must see what can be done. I wonder where they will be lodged."

"I wish one of us could get in, and learn somewhat that is going on," observed La Force.

"So do I, with all my heart," answered his friend. "What say you to my getting my horse again, boldly riding up, swearing that I could not cross the Sèvre, and asking for a night's lodging?"

"If you can venture to do it, it will be a capital plan. How say you, friends?"

The proposition seemed to meet general approbation. "But I say," proceeded Oncques, "you must keep a sharp look-out round the house for any signal I may be able to make."

"Ay, ay," answered La Force. "They seem to be getting quieter now; and I think we may venture to draw a little closer in:—but whatever you do, lose no time. We have none to spare."

"No, no, I warrant you," said the other. He stole back

again to the place where the horses had been left; and in a short time his companions had the satisfaction of hearing him ride up the avenue towards the house. They heard him ring the bell—the door was opened—and he was admitted. Presently the horse was led round to the stables; and all seemed quiet. Another quarter of an hour's waiting changed the appearance of the house. The light in the winter-parlour grew much fainter; for Charles, on being left to his own meditations, had extinguished the wax candles which had been burning on the mantel-piece and on a side table. That in the housekeeper's room went out; but the flickering brilliance in the upper windows was exchanged for a more steady glare, as if the persons who occupied them were retiring to rest. Once or twice a shadow seemed to cross the curtains; and then the light burned clear and uneclipsed again.

La Force now drew up his party close round the house, leaving, as far as his power lay, no side or angle that was not exposed to observation. He himself took up his position right under the eastern parlour, which he judged, and rightly judged, to be the only room where any one was sitting up. "I wonder who that is," thought he to himself. "Colonel Duchenier, I suppose. Well, I trust he will not be long; for we must be doing something quickly. Surely Oncques might have given us some sign by this time." He looked uneasily at the various lights yet remaining. "Three still," he said; "and two of them, I take it, in bedrooms. Well, it cannot be eleven yet.—Hush! what's that?"

As he spoke, he heard an indistinct noise of talking on the southern side of the old part of the house; and he stepped back to the concealment of a thick holly-bush that grew in the middle of the lawn. Presently the man, by name Chemillé, who had been left to watch that part, came round the corner, saying cautiously, "La Force! La Force!"

"Here I am," said that personage, emerging from his retreat. "What's the matter?"

"Oncques is up at a little window here, and wants to see you," replied he.

"Thank God!" cried La Force. "Pshaw! how strong habit is!—I mean that it is all right." And he followed.

"La Force," said Oncques, looking from a small window on the second story, "get the men together up to that little door at the corner. It is only bolted inside. I will come down and draw the bolt."

"Run round, Chemillé, and bring them here," said La Force. "Make haste, make haste, Oncques."

He waited outside the door; one after another the men came up; and at last a stealthy footstep was heard inside. The bolt was drawn back, and the whole party entered, and found Oncques, with a light, in the small hall, or vestibule, to which they had gained access.

"It is all safe," said he. "Before I spoke to you, I fastened the door at yonder end of the passage, and so shut off all the servants. They are quite at the other end of the house. If we can do it without any noise, we may have no occasion to interfere with them."

"Where do we go, then?" said La Force.

"I can't tell you how the rooms lie; but this back staircase leads up to all of them. Was that light out we were looking at?"

"No," answered La Force.

"Colonel Duchenier is up, then. Take off your shoes, every one, and follow me."

He led them along the passage of which he had spoken, then up a short flight of stairs, then motioned to La Force and two others to accompany him, while the rest stayed; and in a moment they were outside the door of the parlour. This room, of which we have spoken so often, lay about halfway up the house; that is, there was a short staircase up to it, and another short staircase to the sleeping-rooms above it. There was a strong rim of light under the door, and no sound whatever in the room.

Having placed the three men there, Oncques returned to the rest, merely saying to those he left, "Take him as he comes out—he will not be long." Then he proceeded, with the remainder of his party, up the flight of stairs which lay to the left, for he was pretty sure that he should find those whom he was seeking in that direction. Indeed, he had been at one time a housebreaker by profession, and had never entirely

retired from that occupation; so that he was accustomed, by such lengthened observations without, and such hurried glances within the walls as he had that night obtained, to form a very accurate guess at the respective locality of the rooms.

La Force, after waiting two or three minutes at his post, bethought himself of applying his eye to the keyhole, for the purpose of obtaining some precise information as to its tenant. Kneeling down on one knee, he saw Colonel Duchenier sitting by the now almost expiring fire—a book in his hand; and he watched him thus for about half a minute. Then that officer rose, took out his watch, wound it up, went up to the table and poured out a glass of wine, drank it, and was just replacing the glass on the table, when a shrill, short, stifled scream was heard from the top of the staircase to the left. La Force sprang to his feet; Duchenier, who had probably heard it less distinctly, seemed to listen half a moment, and then flew to the door.

"Now!" said La Force; and in a second the three men were upon him. Duchenier was very strong, and struggled violently; but his assailants were also very powerful men, and in half a minute he was secured and gagged. Tying him hand and foot, they laid him down in the parlour, and left the man Chemillé, with a pistol in his hand, to watch over him, while they themselves went to seek their comrades.

Those comrades we must now follow. On coming out on the upper landing, they saw, from the light under the door, that two rooms were occupied, and, without further ceremony, knocked at the nearest.

"Come in, dear Madame Duchenier," replied Rose, thinking that it could be no one else, as she had already bidden the housekeeper good night, and declined all assistance in her toilette.

Oncques opened the door. Rose was kneeling by the side of a trunk, and about to open it; and she did not turn her head for a moment, being engaged in fitting the key to the lock. A heavy step, however, made her start up, and, on seeing the two ruffians, who were now close by her side, she gave the shriek which has already been mentioned as startling Duchenier.

"Keep quiet," said Oncques, "as you value your life!" And grasping her with his right arm, he pressed his left arm on her mouth. "Scream again," he said, "and you shall be gagged. I can manage her well enough: you go on to the other room."

"What's the matter? what's the matter?" asked Madame le Brun, looking out from her young mistress's room, and mistaking the intruders, in the hurry and confusion of the moment, and in the imperfect light, for Texier and his friends.

"Stand back, old woman!" cried one of the men; and before the terrified housekeeper could reclose the door, his heavy hand was upon it, and it was pushed back. In a moment the other ruffians had seized Marie Duchenier, and threatened her with instant death if she screamed.

"We have them all now," said one of the party. "What are we to do next?"

"Off with them as soon as may be," replied Oncques, who at that moment entered the room. "We shall find Santerre at Angers."

Marie, though beyond measure terrified, retained presence of mind enough to see that the men who surrounded her were not soldiers; and in that circumstance she saw a gleam of hope.

"I will not scream or cry out," she said; "but I surely may speak. What is your object in making us prisoners?"

"Ask no questions, and I'll tell no lies," replied Oncques. "Better carry them down stairs, Chemillé."

"If you mean to make a gain by selling us," persisted Marie, "to the national officers, you would be paid more for carrying us back to La Chateignerie than they will give you."

Oncques seemed to pause for a moment, and what might have been the result of his meditations it is hard to say; but at that moment La Force came up stairs.

"It is not altogether for gain," replied Oncques. "We took you for the purpose of making you over to those from whom you ran away, and we shall do what we intended."

"Not to Santerre! not to Santerre!" cried Marie, clasping her hands in agony.

"Oh, yes, to Santerre, Madame Duchenier," said La Force. "You know you got away from him cleverly enough, and cleverly enough we shall bring you back to him. You know I owed your lover—I beg pardon, your husband—a little debt of gratitude; and when I get him to Paris, I will pay it him."

"Come," said Oncques, "there is no time to waste. We don't seem to have disturbed any one, except this old lady; and what are we to do with her?"

"Oh, tie her up here!" replied La Force. "She may scream her throat out, without any one hearing her till morning."

"Well," said the housekeeper, "I mayn't live long; but I shall live long enough to see you brought to the guillotine, you bloodthirsty villains."

"You'll have a good spell of life, then, old lady," cried Oncques. "Come, Madame Duchenier, we can't wait here for ever."

"At least," said Marie, "you will give me five minutes to dress myself for the journey: you won't refuse that? You may satisfy yourselves that I can't escape."

With some difficulty this request was granted; and the men left the room, and waited outside the door. Oncques and La Force there held a hurried and rapid conversation in whispers.

"Well," said the former, "well, perhaps you are right. We will separate: you to Angers with the ladies, I to Nantes with the colonel. You have two, I have but one. I will take two of the men, and you five—then we shall be just six and three; and each party must make the best bargain for themselves they can."

"Agreed," said La Force. "We shall perhaps meet again: if not, we have both of us done a good night's work."

"Ay," answered Oncques. "And now I'll be off. Good night."

To describe the agony of Marie Duchenier, when she found that her husband was carried off in another direction, and that she was to be left in perfect ignorance of his des-

tination and his fate, is impossible. It served for the time to throw into the shade her own intense terror of again falling into the hands of Santerre, and being conveyed to Paris. She and Rose were carried back into the winter-parlour, which they had recently left under circumstances so different. The fire was not yet out; the chair, which Duchenier had pushed back from the chimney-corner, remained as he had left it; and the hearts of both the fair girls were almost bursting with the thought, that did the villagers of Cerisay know of their condition, even yet they would be saved; and that there were enough brave defenders within those very walls to render the success of their captors more than doubtful.

"I will take care of them," said La Force to his division of the party. "Do you go down for the horses, and get a couple more out of the stable."

He was thus left alone with his prisoners. The wine was standing on the table: he poured a glass out, and drank to their very pleasant journey. Marie resolved to make one last effort.

"La Force," she said, "if you take M. Duchenier and ourselves back again to La Chateignerie, I promise you, on his part and on my father's, twenty thousand francs, and no questions shall be asked."

"I would not do it," he replied, "for a hundred thousand;" and looked out at the door, as if to see whether his companions were returning.

CHAPTER X.

It was about sunset on the 29th of May; the day had been cloudless, and Paris had been intensely hot. Now, though the sultriness had somewhat passed over, houses, pavé, walls, all glowed like an oven; and the few inhabitants of that devoted city whom the possible refreshment of an evening breeze had lured out, found themselves disappointed in their hopes. Indeed, there were not many persons about; the shops were being closed early; and there were various signals, but too familiar to the citizens, that some new movement was expected. Various and uncertain rumours were propagated among the knots that clustered in the corners of the principal streets: now it was that the Convention were resolved on crushing the rising spirit of the Jacobins; now that the section of La Butte-des-Moulins, the wealthiest in Paris, had displayed the white cockade, and declared for the Bourbons; now that Marat and Robespierre had been heard to declare that a hundred thousand victims were claimed as a sacrifice by public justice. Every where there was doubt, fear, mistrust, and suspicion; and well there might be,—the Reign of Terror was about to begin.

Two persons, on that eventful evening, were walking slowly along the Boulevard Poissonnière. The elder of the two seemed a substantial citizen, who had seen a few more than fifty years; the other might be a servant, or a dependent, or even perhaps a poor relation; for while his personal appearance led to the former conclusion, the conversation carried on between him and his companion would seem to justify the latter belief. The citizen, however, appeared less at home in the knowledge of his locality than might have been expected. He once or twice looked round him, as if inclined to ask the way; he turned up the Rue Poissonnière,

and after taking a few steps turned again, saying, "No, we had better keep straight on;" and at last, apparently to his better satisfaction, he went up the Rue Hauteville.

"They have so altered these streets, Texier," he said, "that I can hardly find the way; but I don't want to ask it, if it can be avoided."

"Better go a little wrong than do that, monsieur," said Texier; for it was none other than our old friend. "A few steps more or less will not make much difference."

"You will come in with me," said M. de Beaurepaire—for it was he that spoke—"if we can get admission for love or money."

"And, if I may ask, monsieur, what do you mean to do?"

"Nothing directly, Texier; but I shall learn what her situation is—that will be one thing; and whether any thing can be done for her—that is another; and we may perhaps have the means of making the gaoler more attentive to her than he otherwise would be."

A tumultuous rabble of men, boys, and women—the very offcasts of the most abandoned in that great city—approached them. They were laughing, shouting, and screaming, while chiming-in, after a fashion, in the Marseillaise, which some of the mob were chanting. To look at them was enough to make the blood run cold. The long tangled hair of the men—their bloodshot eyes—their brutal gestures—their mingled rags and finery—their caps of liberty—their tricoloured cockades—their utter recklessness, abundantly apparent in their mien, for life, property, honour, and every thing else that man, till that time, had held valuable or sacred—caused De Beaurepaire and his companion almost involuntarily to stand aside.

"Beg your pardon, citizen," cried one of the ringleaders, knocking off De Beaurepaire's hat, which another kicked from under his hand, just as he was about to pick it up, to Texier's intense rage; "pray are you from the Palais Royal?"

"No, citoyen," replied De Beaurepaire, determined to treat the matter as a good joke—"from the Quai de la Cité. But pray, is it your good pleasure that no one from the Palais Royal shall wear their hats?"

"They shall not wear their heads much longer," returned the party who had first spoken; "the white cockade is up there, and we are just going to pull it down."

"That's right—that's right!" cried De Beaurepaire; "mind you are not too late, though; I met another body of citizens coming along the Boulevard Montmartre."

"We won't be late, any how," cried one or two voices; and De Beaurepaire and Texier were allowed to proceed in safety. Turning to the right, they came presently out in front of the Prison S. Lazare. A gloomy place it was in the best of times; but now, while De Beaurepaire looked on its vast extent of walls, and thought of the misery they girded in, his very heart sank within him; and nothing but his determined purpose to save his child, at whatever sacrifice, could have prevented his even then turning back. He rang the bell; and while waiting for a reply to his summons, said quietly to Texier, "Now, my good friend, I am going to put my head into the lion's mouth; but there is no reason why you should do so, unless you like. If my daughter recognises me openly, there is no doubt of my fate; and none, I should think, about yours. Come with me, if you like; stay outside, if you like: I am determined to see her, cost what it may."

"I will go with you, monsieur; GOD will protect us," replied Texier.

While they are thus waiting at the gate, we must briefly explain by what means it came to pass that they were at this time in Paris. Texier had slept late on the morning following the capture of Duchenier and Marie,—late for him, that is,—for it was past six o'clock before he awoke. He roused his companions, and, somewhat surprised at the unusual silence that prevailed in the house, they went forth to the stables, for the purpose of attending to their horses. Here, to their intense astonishment, they found the door broken open, and two of the horses gone; and returned to the house to give the alarm. On entering the hall, they found the great door left open; and Texier, exceedingly terrified, proceeded up stairs, crying out for M. Duchenier. The first room he entered was the winter-parlour; and there he found a candle burnt out in the socket, and no other sign of occupation.

He went up stairs, knocking at and opening every door; and finding no room that had been slept in, till he arrived at that which had been appropriated to Madame Duchenier. As soon as he opened it, Madame le Brun, who had passed the night in that extremity of terror as now hardly to be in the possession of her senses, overcome with joy at finding that the unexpected visitor was a friend, went off into a succession of hysterics, which Texier knew much better how to execrate than to manage. However, he saw that something very terrible had happened; and, rushing to the top of the stairs, he shouted loudly for his companions. In process of time, and with the use of the proper restoratives, Madame le Brun was enabled to give something like a connected account of the whole affair.

Recommending the housekeeper to take refuge with Father Laval, and calling on his companions to saddle their horses and follow him, Texier ran to the stables, mounted his horse, who had just finished his morning feed of corn, rode like a madman down the avenue, and never drew rein till the town of La Chateignerie rose clearly before him. The Vendeans were just on the point of evacuating it; M. de Beaurepaire was talking to Lescure at the head of his troops, in the Place Ste. Marguerite, and most of the other chiefs were within hearing, when Texier, as well as agitation would let him, told his tale. The indignation of the leaders was only to be equalled by their surprise. That any number of the Blues could thus have ventured to penetrate into the heart of their own territory, seemed incomprehensible; and it was only the exclamation of the wretched father which at last discovered to them the way in which it had been accomplished.

"I see it all!—I see it all!" he cried. "It is that villain La Force. He has been missing since the night before last. I guessed he must have changed his mind; but I could not see how. Gentlemen all, you will excuse me; I must ride to Cerisay instantly."

"Would," said Lescure, "that the very urgent situation of our affairs did not render it wrong for me to think of accompanying you; though I fear that I could give you little real assistance! But be assured that if our advancing in any

particular manner can further your designs, you may command us."

"I am sure I may," said De Beaurepaire, hastily.—"Texier, you will go with me?"

"Undoubtedly, monsieur." For such was the curious state of the Vendean army, that a soldier by no means considered it necessary to ask leave of absence from his officer, even on the eve of an important expedition, like that on which the Catholic army was now about to be engaged.

Arrived at Cerisay, M. de Beaurepaire had no great difficulty in learning that his daughter had been taken to Santerre at Angers: and that Father Laval had never been seen since he left the cottage where the sick child lay, whom he had proposed to visit, as we have seen. That cottage was situated at the side of the Nantes road. The bereaved father made his way to Chatillon that night; learned that the story of the messenger despatched by Madame de Lescure was a mere fabrication; and stayed at La Boulaye one day, till he could provide himself and Texier with clothes that would not excite suspicion. On the second night he arrived in Paris, and took up his abode at an obscure inn in the Rue du Cherche Midi, supposing that he should find his daughter either in the Luxembourg, or in the Rue des Sèvres; nor, till after a long series of inquiries, did he learn that all the recent prisoners from the south-west had been transferred to the Saint Lazare; and that, without doubt, he would find her there.

After waiting for some five minutes at the gate, as we have related, the heavy bars were drawn back, and a turnkey made his appearance, who, in his air and general behaviour, agreeably disappointed the preconceived ideas of De Beaurepaire.

"Pray," said he, "is it permitted to the prisoners to see their friends?"

"Oh yes, monsieur," answered the man; "from nine o'clock till eight: it is very near eight o'clock now."

"There is a young lady of the name of Duchenier here, whom I am anxious to see—as she is a distant relation of mine—she is from La Vendée, and they tell me that you

have had a good number from that part of the country lately."

"Step in, monsieur; is the young man coming in?"

Texier replied by following his master; and the two accompanied the guide across a gravel court, paved in the middle with broad flag-stones, and shaded by one or two miserable elm-trees, that seemed to droop in the confinement of the prison. From this they ascended the steps of a small projecting portico; and the turnkey ushered them into a waiting-room at the side.

"Stay here," said he, "till I go and let the governor know."

Accordingly De Beaurepaire and Texier entered as directed; the former seated himself on a wooden bench, the only article of furniture in the apartment, except a high standing-desk with drawers, and with pen and ink on the top ledge; and Texier found such amusement as he could in looking out of the grated windows, at the smoky chimneys of the Rue des Petites Ecuries. The waiting-room was paved with stone, and matted in the middle; and if the adventurers had waited ten years instead of ten minutes, they would have found no other subject for their contemplation besides those that we have mentioned.

At length Naudet, the governor of the prison, whose name is never mentioned without an eulogium on his kindness, and who eventually suffered for it, presented himself with a long folio book under his arm. After making a low bow to De Beaurepaire, "You are late, monsieur," he said; "but I will stretch a point for once, and you shall see the lady you are inquiring for, if she be here. What is her name?"

"Duchenier,—Marie Duchenier. I am much obliged, monsieur, by your kindness."

"B, C, D," said the gaoler, turning over the leaves of his book. "Delaune, Deffand, Delassé—I cannot see the name, monsieur—Dutigné—Duchenier, Marie, née De Beaurepaire,—is that it, monsieur?"

"That is it," replied the father. "I may see her, then, to-night?"

"Immediately, if you follow me. The young man can

stop here till you return.—Ah," he continued, as he led the way to the end of a long passage, and then up a massy staircase, "it is a sad tale, I understand: she was but just married, poor girl; and her father is with the insurgents in La Vendée, and has contrived to render himself peculiarly obnoxious to the government. I think we shall find her in the salon"—and he opened a large handsome door, leading into a lofty, well-aired, and well-furnished apartment. De Beaurepaire summoned all his presence of mind, and followed Naudet. The room was occupied by eighty or ninety ladies and gentlemen, dressed, for the most part, and engaged, as they would have been in an evening party. Various knots were discussing so much of the news of the day as had been permitted to penetrate into the prison; at one corner of the room a lady, seated at a piano, was collecting around her a numerous circle of auditors and admirers; and there was conversation, and merriment, and amusement, to a degree which led De Beaurepaire to doubt the evidence of his senses.

"I beg pardon, ladies and gentlemen," said Naudet to those who stood nearest to him, "for presuming to intrude upon you; but this gentleman is desirous of speaking to Madame Duchenier, if she is in the room."

Marie had been too lately domiciled in the prison to be known by name to many among its tenants; and as she was sitting at a remote corner of the apartment, she did not at first perceive that the gaoler had entered it, nor did she notice the slight confusion which the passing-on his question had occasioned. She was at the moment discussing with Rose the arrangement of their time during the period of their confinement within those walls,—a confinement which neither of them expected to be terminated but by the guillotine.

"Look! look! Madame Duchenier!" cried Rose.

Marie looked up, and saw her father slowly passing down the room, and examining the various groups with which it was occupied, as if in search of some one. She turned very pale, and felt disposed to faint; but by a strong exertion she controlled her emotions; and guessing, as if by instinct, that M. de Beaurepaire must be there in a feigned character (which, indeed, the disguise of his dress sufficiently shewed),

she resolved to take her part from him, and to recognise him no further than he should seem to intend.

"Rose," she said in a whisper, "take no notice of my father till you see further; sit quietly here." And she herself rose and walked as if to meet Naudet.

"Ah, Madame Duchenier," said De Beaurepaire, "I am sorry to find that your father's principles have brought you here. I have obtained leave from the excellent governor, however, to see you, and to learn if I can in any way be of service to you."

"I am much obliged, monsieur," said Marie, with a great effort at self-command. "It is very kind in you to have found us out here."

"Well, monsieur," said Naudet, —"I beg pardon, — I really have not the honour of knowing your name —"

"De Brissac," said the other.

"Well, Monsieur de Brissac," proceeded the gaoler, "I will leave you here for ten minutes; to-night I really cannot allow you any more time; but to-morrow, if you like, at any time after nine, you are very welcome to come."

He turned and went out of the room. "Oh, my dear, dear father," cried Marie, throwing herself into his arms without any fear of the bystanders, "how could you venture to do this?"

"Because," replied he, "I am determined to save you, and I will do it. But I was afraid you would recognise me, and betray all."

The allotted ten minutes slipped away before Marie and her father seemed to have said any thing to each other. The former, however, learnt that her husband had been sent to Nantes; and the latter saw that his daughter's condition was not, for the present, so miserable as his fears had fancied it. His plan of liberating her he would not explain, because he felt that it must be at the sacrifice of his own life; but he comforted her to a very considerable degree, and assured her that he would either see her himself, or communicate with her, the next day. Rose joined in the latter part of the conversation, which was only concluded by the reappearance of Naudet.

"I am sorry to seem uncivil, M. de Brissac, but I fear I cannot allow you to stay longer. Our orders are strict."

"I will come at once," replied De Beaurepaire. "Good night, Mademoiselle Le Grand; good night, Madame Duchenier." And he followed the gaoler down stairs. He had made up his mind as to the course he was to pursue; for Marie had related several little incidents of Naudet, which convinced him that he was a man of honour; and he accordingly requested one moment's private conversation with him as they were descending the stairs. Naudet led him into a small room at the other side of the hall, and setting down his candle on the table, prepared to listen, not without some fear that he was about to be insulted by the offer of a bribe.

"I am going, M. Naudet," said De Beaurepaire, "to throw myself entirely on your generosity. I am sure you would not betray an unfortunate man, who is in the wretched circumstances in which I now find myself."

"Make yourself perfectly easy, monsieur," said Naudet; "I believe I am acquainted with the confession you wish to make."

"It is impossible," said De Beaurepaire.

"I think not," replied the gaoler, smiling. "I believe that I have the honour of addressing M. de Beaurepaire."

"Well," said De Beaurepaire, "I certainly shall not attempt to deny the charge—for, as I said, I had just made up my mind to confess it. But how you discovered it, I cannot think."

"Oh," replied Naudet, "we are unfortunately compelled to look on a great deal of anxiety as displayed by our visitors, and I can never mistake a parent's. But, however, I must not take credit to myself for much knowledge of character in the present case. The truth is, you had not settled with your servant what name he was to give you, and the M. de Brissac of the salon was changed into M. de Saintonge in the hall."

De Beaurepaire looked half-vexed—and I had almost said half-amused—at his own forgetfulness; but then he said hurriedly to Naudet, "I am sure I may trust your honour."

"Make yourself perfectly easy, M. de Beaurepaire," returned the gaoler. "But you probably had some end in

making this confession to me. Is there any thing I can do for you?"

"I am only going to ask you for your advice, and for that I shall be most truly thankful. The facts of the case you see: my daughter is in confinement here, with I fear, very small chance of escape in the ordinary way. Is it not so?"

"Well, monsieur," said Naudet, "you take a gloomy view of the case; but I will not deny that she is in considerable danger."

"At the same time, as you see, I, who am an aristocrat by principles, and who have actually joined the Catholic army, and who must be a much greater object to Government than a poor harmless girl, am free. The question is, Do you think that by giving up myself I could procure her liberty?"

Naudet paused for more than a minute, and then said, "Well, monsieur, it is clear you are a bold man, or you never would have ventured here. If you choose to lay down your head on the guillotine for the sake of preserving your daughter from a great chance of doing so, I think the scheme is practicable. But you are bound to take care lest you destroy yourself without saving her."

"I know there will be danger," returned De Beaurepaire, "but it must be risked any how; her case cannot be worse off than it is. What I wanted your advice upon is, the best means of making the offer."

"The best advice," replied Naudet, "that I can give you is this, deal with principals only. If you trust the matter to subalterns, you will infallibly be lost."

"Whom do you mean by principals?" inquired De Beaurepaire.

"Whom should I mean," answered Naudet, with a smile, "but our three leading men, Robespierre, Danton, and Marat? If you take my counsel, you will see one of them in person; your own genius must do the rest."

"I am so completely a stranger in Paris," said De Beaurepaire, "that I really know not where to go for the purpose of applying to any one of the triumvirate."

"If you wish to see Robespierre—and it would be your best chance—he at present lives at No. 67, Rue de la Sour-

dière; it runs, you know, out of the Rue S. Honoré. You had better seek him there; and I would advise you to lose no time; for, depend upon it, your place of abode and your person will soon be known."

"I thank you, monsieur," replied De Beaurepaire, "with all my heart. If I do not see you again (as it is probable I never shall), I trust you will, so far as you can, alleviate the misfortunes of my poor daughter, and of the young lady who is her companion."

"Depend upon me, monsieur," said Naudet. "I have the honour to wish you good night."

De Beaurepaire went out at the gate, and was followed by Texier, who, as soon as they were out of the precincts, and De Beaurepaire had given a five-franc piece to the turnkey, said, "Oh, monsieur! I never expected to see you alive out of this place! They asked me what your name was, when M. Naudet came down after he had been up with you; and, you know, we had never settled that. So I said M. de Saintonge, for I once knew a gentleman of that name, and it was the first that came into my head—and then M. Naudet laughed."

"He well might," replied De Beaurepaire, "for I had called myself M. de Brissac. But I told him the whole story."

Poor Texier stared at his master with an expression of astonishment and horror which almost provoked a smile.

"Yes, Texier," he said, "I knew I might trust him, and I asked his advice in our present business; and what is more, I shall take it."

"Well, monsieur, well," sighed Texier, "you know best; and I hope it will be for the best. But how is madame, and the other young lady?"

"Quite as cheerful as I could hope to find them," returned De Beaurepaire. "The place is far less like a prison than I thought. There were ladies and gentlemen in the drawing-room, much as there might have been at Cerisay."

This seemed to puzzle Texier still more; for he had no idea of imprisonment without bolts, and bars, and dungeons. However, he swallowed down his surprise, and walked on by the side of De Beaurepaire. At the Place S. Denis the

latter called a hackney-coach, and directed the coachman to drive to the Place du Palais Royal.

"Now, Texier," he said, when they both had got in (for Texier's dress was not one which rendered it singular for him to do so), "I am going myself to this terrible Robespierre, of whom you have heard so much. I shall send you home in the coach, for I doubt you could not find your way on foot. I am determined, if it be possible, to save my daughter at any sacrifice; and from what I have heard, I think I can. If you hear nothing of me to-night or to-morrow, go about six to S. Lazare, where we have just been. If Madame Duchenier is set at liberty, try to find where she is, and see what you can do for her. If she is not, ask to speak to M. Naudet alone—say you come from M. Brissac—tell him I went to Robespierre, and ask him if he has received any intelligence on the subject of which we spoke. He will tell you whether there is any hope of my daughter's being set free. If there is, you will then be better able to judge what you should do than I can tell you now. If not, take care of yourself, and get back to La Vendée as soon as you can. Do you understand what I have been saying to you?"

"Yes, monsieur," said Texier, in a half-crying voice.

"Very well. Take this purse; there are ten louis d'or in it—and, if I do not return, you will find a hundred more in my writing-desk; pay our lodgings, and take the rest for yourself."

"Oh, oh, monsieur," cried Texier, and he fairly began to cry.

"Come, come," said De Beaurepaire, kindly, "that will not mend the matter. Perhaps I shall get my head out of the lion's mouth again. Any how, I mean to try, I assure you."

In a few minutes more, the coach stopped. De Beaurepaire got out, and after giving directions to the coachman to drive to his own lodgings, he walked up the Rue S. Honoré. It was now nearly dark: a good many of the shops were closed; the miserable lamps scarcely did any thing else than expose their own wretchedness; the sweet breath of a May evening was lost and overpowered by the

foul scents of the huge and crowded city; but thinking very little of aught save of his expected interview, De Beaurepaire passed on. Still, he could not avoid noticing that there was unusual stir and commotion in the streets; the groups which he had seen towards sunset were now rather increased than diminished; once or twice, at a distance, he caught the Marseillaise, chanted, he thought, by a considerable number of men; and scarcely one respectable inhabitant appeared abroad. He was now in the Rue de la Sourdière; and though, as we have seen, possessed of the greatest possible constitutional insensibility to danger, he could not conceal from himself his own agitation. It was not fear for his own life; it was not so much apprehension for his daughter's, for he had persuaded himself that, in some way or other, she would be saved; it was rather a sensation of horror, much as he would have experienced had he been about to be ushered into the presence of a fiend; for nothing less than a fiend could, he thought, have devised and arranged the massacres of September. However, he was not a man to shew any symptoms of irresolution; so he walked steadily on, looking up at the doors he was passing: now it was No. 64—now 65—now 66—and at length he stood before the fatal No. 67.

The house was distinguished in no respect from those in the street, except that it was somewhat smaller. There were two stone steps leading up to the door, a brightly polished brass knocker, with painted railings; and the whole aspect of the place was remarkable for nothing but its neatness. A light was burning in what appeared the drawing-room. Without any hesitation he knocked, and waited with patience till the door was opened by a kind of page.

"Is M. Robespierre at home?" he asked.

"He is at home," was the answer; "but he is very particularly engaged."

"Take him up that card," returned De Beaurepaire, writing on one which he took from his pocket, "and say that I have intelligence respecting an important prisoner, whom he might wish to secure."

The page took it, and left him standing in the hall, or

lighted by a tallow candl

M. de Brissac, La Flèche;

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well have been taken for, and perhaps really were, those of a madman; his eyes were blood-shot, and rolled restlessly hither and thither; he seemed incapable of sitting quietly in his chair for many minutes together. Such was Marat.

De Beaurepaire made up his mind in a moment, that, could he have had his choice to which of the triumvirate he would have preferred addressing himself, it would have been Danton, whose broad, flabby, huge features seemed capable of expressing a kind of brutal good-nature.

"Sit down, M. de Brissac, pray be seated," said Robespierre. "So you are from La Flêche, I find. I hope that town has not suffered from those scourges of my native country, the Vendean army? Ah! I could weep to think of the misery that my beautiful France is at this moment suffering from them. It would melt a heart of stone, how much more one like mine!"

"I am from La Flêche, monsieur," said De Beaurepaire, "and was desirous of informing you that I believe I am able to put into your hands M. de Beaurepaire, who so shamefully eluded the national troops."

"Ah!" growled Marat, "we heard a good deal of that tale; somebody ought to lose their heads for that piece of negligence. However, if we get hold of that aristocratical villain, the rest will be easy."

"How? did you say you were able to put him into our hands, M. de Brissac?" demanded Robespierre.

"I said, monsieur, that I know how it could be done, if you will allow me to explain ——"

At this moment there was a loud knock at the door. "That is Henriot," said Robespierre. "M. de Brissac, have the kindness to step into the other drawing-room," and he pointed to one which opened out of the apartment where they were sitting; "or stay, nothing will pass which any honest citizen is not perfectly welcome to hear,—eh, Danton?"

"No," said the deep voice of that terrible-looking man. "I suppose there is no doubt that M. de Brissac *is* an honest citizen; but we have only his own word for it."

"Nay, M. Danton," began De Beaurepaire; but he was

interrupted by the appearance of the page, and a short, stout-set, butcher-like man, in the uniform of the National Guard, white turned up with blue. This was Henriot, commander of the armed force of Paris.

"Well, Henriot, well?" demanded Marat.

"It will be all right," replied the officer. "I have disposed the force under my command round the hall, so that not a soul can escape, if we are so disposed. They know it, too. You have but to go down, and demand what you will."

"Where are the Federates?" asked Robespierre.

"In the Champs Elysées," replied Henriot, "guns harnessed—howitzers ready—grape piled—shot ready for heating. If the fools choose to rush on their fate, let them."

"I will go down early," said Robespierre. "Bring up your troops as near as you can, and take care that they are known to be near. We stick to one thing—the twenty-two members of Convention, and we will have them."

"And you shall have them!" said Henriot, and left the room.

"Now, M. de Brissac," said Danton, "your proposal."

"This, monsieur. You have De Beaurepaire's daughter in prison, in the S. Lazare; her father is doatingly fond of her; he has written to say that, if she be set at liberty, or he can have good assurance that she is to be, he will surrender himself; and as I was, in former times, a friend of the family, I agreed to charge myself with the negotiation, thinking that I should be doing a good service to the government, and, at the same time, saving a girl who certainly has in no way injured the republic."

"Humph!" said Marat. "As to that, by your own confession, she is the daughter of an aristocrat. When we knock a wolf on the head, we don't generally save the cubs."

"No," said De Beaurepaire, with great nonchalance; "but then the thing here is, that you can't knock the wolf on the head unless you give up the cub."

"Exactly," said Robespierre; "there is much truth in what M. de Brissac urges. It would be a glorious sacrifice to justice, to shed the blood of one who has so grossly trampled on her as this De Beaurepaire; it would be a salutary spec-

tacle to those priest-led insurgents to find that, even in the very heart of the disturbed provinces, the law and justice are not powerless. Only, my good friend, let me have some substantial proof that the offer is made as you say, and I, for my part, shall be most willing to sign a conditional order to the governor of the S. Lazare for the liberation of the girl, as soon as the father has substituted himself for her."

"I have not the letter with me," replied De Beaurepaire; "I left it, unfortunately, at my lodgings."

"Meet me at ten o'clock, in the hall, to-morrow," said Robespierre, "and the matter may be arranged. Where are you lodging?"

"At the Vieil Coq, Rue du Cherche Midi, monsieur. I will not fail to attend you; and now I will have the honour of wishing you good night."

With a courteous good night from Robespierre, and a kind of growl from his two companions, De Beaurepaire left the room.

"Well," said he to himself, as he went out into the street, "I scarcely expected to have left that room a free man. It will be but for a few hours."

CHAPTER XI.

We must shift the scene to the terrible Hall of Convention. It was already full, though the great clock had not yet struck ten, when M. de Beaurepaire pushed his way, not without difficulty, into the lower end of it. It was a long, lofty room: the president's rostrum at the upper end; seats for the members down each side; and a table, covered with green cloth, and pens and paper, below the president's seat. To the right of that seat the Girondist party placed themselves,—men who had been playing at making a fancied republic, till their theoretical democracy was on the point of vanishing into the law of the strongest. The only noble countenances in the hall were on those benches; and Lanjuinais, its pillar of strength, had come down to his post, pale and thoughtful, yet evidently having collected all his energies, and with a determination like that of Dryden's hero;

> "Past hope of safety, 'twas his latest care,
> Like falling Cæsar, decently to die."

At the lower end of the hall, occupying both the right and left benches, sat the party of the Plain,—the miserable and vacillating section who knew what was right, and voted what was safe. Barrère was evidently extremely anxious. He stretched his long, crane-like neck to those who were sitting nearest to him, asking a question here—insinuating a doubt there—waiting for an opinion from this deputy—seeking to enforce his own sentiments on that; while the painful movement of his lower jaw would, to a physiognomist, have sufficiently expressed the vehemence of the doubts by which he was tortured.

The Jacobins alone, who held the left of the president, had not as yet mustered strongly; yet many of the leaders were

there. Couthon, that miserable caricature of humanity, with his paralysed extremities and distorted face, sat caressing his silky-haired spaniel; Chaumette and Billaud Varennes were deep in their consultations of blood, and eagerly scanning the features and the numbers of their opponents; Tallien, Legendre, Barras, Fouché, David, Saint Just, Collot d'Herbois, and monsters of a similar character, sat there in gloomy silence; but the great leaders had not yet appeared. It was evident to all that a very large mob had collected on the outside: as some noxious or popular member entered, there were cheers or groans; and such cries as "Vive Robespierre!"—"*A bas la Convention!*"—"Death to the two-and-twenty!" could give no room for doubt that the assembly was, in fact, immured in a prison. At last Robespierre entered, shortly after followed by Danton. The president ascended the rostrum, and rang his bell to command silence, and the deliberations began.

"M. le President," said Robespierre, ascending the tribunal, "I am here this day as the representative of the victorious, the enlightened, the glorious people, from whom this Convention derives its authority, and for whose benefit we are to construct or reconstruct the laws." Here there was a loud yell in the Place du Carrousel; and presently Vergniaud, the most eloquent of the Girondists, entered, covered with blood, and endeavoured to address himself to the president.

"Robespierre has the tribunal! Robespierre has the tribunal!" shouted the Jacobin party.

"I demand a hearing—I am on a point of order—I appeal to the president—I *will* be heard!" shouted Vergniaud, but in vain. Robespierre maintained his place; and the president, rising, said, or was thought, in the confusion, to say, that Robespierre had the right of speech.

"Yes, gentlemen," he continued, "I stand before you as one of the representatives of that great and invincible people, who alone, of all the nations of the world, have dared to proclaim the sacred principles of liberty, equality, and universal brotherhood."

A loud cheer followed at the bottom of the hall, into which armed men were now rapidly pouring.

Lanjuinais rose. "M. le President," he began,—but shouts rose, both from the Mountain and the Plain, of "Sit down! sit down! Robespierre, Robespierre!"—and a still more fearful cry at the bottom, "Lanjuinais to the guillotine!" However, the Girondist made up by gesticulations what was denied him in the power of utterance. He pointed to the intruders, he raised his hand to the sky, till he was fairly roared down.

"Why am I here?" said Robespierre; "why are these citizens pouring into the hall? why does virtue arm them for their work? Why, but that they and I,—they by my mouth, and we by their hands,—call for justice on traitors! Justice, so long and so vainly demanded. Sublime emotion! I behold arms stretched out to strike the blow: I beheld, as I came hither, lines and lines of our brave fellow-citizens eager to assert their rights." Waiting to allow the cheering to subside, which was taken up by the crowd without, though they knew nothing but that Robespierre was speaking, he proceeded:—"I am here, M. le President, to demand a decree of death for the twenty-two traitors whose names the two thousand petitioners laid before you. I demand their death, because they are accomplices of Dumouriez; because they are allies of England; because they are enemies of the city of Paris; because they desire a federative instead of an indivisible republic. M. le President, the citizens cry for their blood, and they must have it!" He sat down, and the cheers without the building rose loud and long, and were heard from the Northern Boulevards as far as the Luxembourg.

For some moments there was no reply. The principal Girondists, all of whom were included in the proscription, gazed in terror at one another, or interchanged a few hurried whispers. There was a low buzz of expectation in the hall, when Barrère, the leader of the Plain, ascended the tribunal. His party had influence enough to turn the scale either way; and De Beaurepaire listened with intense eagerness for his sentiments; knowing that he would incline to the party of the strongest, and by so doing, make it the strongest indeed.

"M. le President," he began, "I find myself—and I am sure all the members must find themselves—in a very painful

situation. On the one hand, the eloquent demand of him, whom Paris has so honourably distinguished by the name of the Incorruptible, seems to have struck a responding chord in the hearts of its citizens. On the other, the gentlemen on the other side of the house have had, I am sure, and still have, the purest intentions for the public good. Still, it cannot be denied that they have been unhappy enough to fall under the suspicion of the people. We must not now inquire by what conjunction of circumstances this has happened. So it is: and the members of whom I speak are, I am sure, too honourable to deny it. I see but one remedy; and though it demands a sacrifice from them, it is such a sacrifice as every good citizen must be prepared to make for the welfare of his country. Let them resign their places as deputies; then the power of giving offence ceases, and with that the right of taking it. Then the Convention will throw its ægis over them; then it will menace with its displeasure those who shall venture to do them wrong by word or deed. It is the only way to restore peace: we must yield so far, or we shall be entirely crushed."

The Plain applauded vehemently: and there were some symptoms of approbation among the more moderate Jacobins. But the mob, inside and out of the hall, gave no signs of concurring in the motion; and Danton was observed to speak in an excited manner to those around him, as if urging them to resist it. But, on a few words from Robespierre, he seemed better satisfied, and a pause ensued, as if it were expected that some leader of the Girondists should signify their approval or disapproval of the plan.

Isnard, a man whose maxim throughout his life had been, everything for peace, mounted the tribunal. "For my own part," said he, "and I believe I am speaking the sentiments of many of my friends, I am for adopting the proposition which we have just heard. No one can have laboured more strenuously for the people's good than I have done; if they are dissatisfied with my efforts, I resign to them my commission."

There were cheers and cries of Bravo! mingled with a few hisses, at the lower end of the hall. Before they had subsided, Lanjuinais had risen. "It may sound well," he said,

"to talk of self-devotion to the public good; it may sound well to speak of resigning to the people a commission which they repent of having intrusted: but there are two questions to be answered, and which, as honest men, the Convention can but answer one way. Can a deputy's commission be resigned at all, till those who gave it him authorise his desertion of his post? Can you, M. le President, receive a resignation thus made? Are you not guilty of treason to the Tiers Etat, in allowing those whom they have constituted their representatives, to unconstitute themselves? And why should we do this? Who calls for the sacrifice? Who demands the victims? Is it the majority of the nation? GOD forbid! Is it the majority of this Convention? Let your own consciences, gentlemen, speak for me. No; it is demanded, without these walls, by a tumultuous rabble, whom thus to have congregated I make bold to call an act of high treason, and the man that did it, a traitor"—and he fixed his eyes on Robespierre. "It is demanded within them"—here the confusion became extreme; eight or ten of the principal Jacobins started to their feet at once; the cry arose in the mob of *Vive Robespierre! Vive Danton! A bas les vingt-deux!* Barrère and his party maintained silence; and the Girondists seemed endeavouring to gather resolution from despair, and to second the courageous opposition of their leader. In the midst of the confusion, Legendre and Chabot, two of the lowest tools of the Jacobin party, passed from their places to the tribunal, and attempted by main force to pull Lanjuinais down from it. A violent scuffle took place before the very eyes of the President, whose bell rang ceaselessly but vainly.

"Cruel men!" cried Lanjuinais; "of old they crowned their victims with garlands; you load them with blows and insults! M. le President, I *will* be heard: I claim my deputy's right; I am in possession of the tribunal: gentlemen, if not for your own conscience-sake, if not for the sake of natural right and justice, at least for shame, hear me!"

One or two of the boldest among the Girondists advanced to the relief of their leader; and Chabot and Legendre slunk back. The uproar subsided a little.

"If you sacrifice us to that bloodthirsty and vengeful

minority," proceeded Lanjuinais, — "if you surrender your brethren to that murderous multitude without, you are sacrificing yourselves at no distant period. The clamour you now hear against us will one day be directed against you: others will mete to you the measure you have given to us: you will have cut away the ground from under your own feet. No! let us perish, if we must; but let it be honourably. Let us go forth to these men; let us command them, on their peril, to retire; if they disobey us, let us adjourn. Never be it said that the Convention was dictated to by the rabble of Paris! — never that they murdered their brethren, because the poniard was at their own throats."

"Let us go! let us go!" shouted many a voice, even from the Plain. And the president, when silence was a little restored, put the motion.

"Let them go!" said Robespierre to those who stood by him: "they will soon come back!"

Thus, standing as it were at bay, and deriving courage from despair, the whole of the members, except the Jacobins, moved in procession from the hall, and sallied out into the gardens of the Tuilleries; De Beaurepaire, and almost all who were in the lower part of the hall, followed, fully perceiving that the crisis was at hand. When the enormous sea of heads burst on the view of the astonished and bewildered deputies, when the whole open space as far as the Etoile des Champs Elysées, and right down to the river-side, and the Quai de la Conférence, seemed alive with the sanguinary mob, the little remaining courage of the Convention failed.

"We can do nothing," said the President to Lanjuinais.

"We can die," replied the Girondist.

At the same time a yell of rage broke forth from the people; the Rue de Rivoli rang again with it. "*A bas les vingt-deux!*" "*A bas la Convention!*" intermingled with howls, hisses, roars, shrieks, and groans; as if they were — and they might almost as well have been — a legion of fiends that surrounded them.

"What is your will, gentlemen?" said Henriot, riding up on a powerful horse, a well-armed body of troops advancing at his signal.

"That you retire!" replied the President, assuming a virtue that he had not, and speaking calmly, and, to all appearance, courageously. "The Convention will not be dictated to; they will judge for themselves who are traitors, and who are not; and in the mean time, none bear so much their appearance as those who think, by brute force, to crush the freedom of deliberation."

"Shall I pass my sword through him?" said Lanjuinais.

Had he done it, instead of asking the question, the Girondists might have triumphed.

"No! for Heaven's sake, no!" cried the President. "It is useless fighting against circumstances."

But Henriot had seen the motion of Lanjuinais, and guessed what was passing in his mind; and, being a thorough coward at heart, reined back his horse. Marat advanced at the head of a hundred ruffians, whose ragged clothes, matted hair, grimy faces, and strange weapons, were more terrible than the regular array of the troops.

"Go back, M. le President," said he. "Give up the traitors; deliberate if you will on the demands of the people, but let your deliberations end in obedience."

The President turned without saying another word; and the return of the Convention almost resembled a flight. The troops drew close round the doors; and, amidst the deepest silence, the retiring members took their seats.

"M. le President," said Couthon, in his place, his natural infirmity rendering him unable to rise—"I beg leave to propose an amendment on the motion of my excellent friend M. Robespierre. He denounced twenty-two persons as traitors; during your absence I have been considering whether that number were sufficiently complete; and I now beg to propose an addition of eight names more. I will read them."

He did so: and the infamy of the act they were about to perpetrate seemed to awe the Convention into silence. The fall of a pin might have been heard.

"I second that amendment," said Collot d'Herbois.

"Is it your pleasure, gentlemen, that the amendment pass?" said the President, in a trembling voice.

There was one effort of expiring shame. The "No! no!" that burst from the Girondists, and from many of the Plain, overpowered for a moment the "Ay! ay!" of the Jacobins and the more complete time-servers. But it was but for a moment; and when the President called for a shew of hands, there could be no doubt that the amendment was carried.

Then all was confusion. Some of the proscribed deputies made their escape; the greater part were arrested by Henriot, who entered while the question was being put; the members who had any sense of honour slunk away to meditate on their own infamy; and the voice of the President was scarcely heard when he put the motion, that the Convention do adjourn.

De Beaurepaire, though fearfully interested in this debate, had not lost sight of Robespierre, nor forgotten his own errand. That personage remained talking with a few of his intimate friends, when the President and the rest of the members had retired. At length they all left the hall together. As Robespierre descended the steps, De Beaurepaire caught his eye.

"Ah, M. de Brissac," he said; "I remember your errand. Come back with me to my lodgings, and I will give you the paper you wish for. Well, we have had a fair morning's work—have we not? and the way to perfect liberty lies open before us."

"It does, M. Robespierre," returned De Beaurepaire. "Your plans had been laid well."

"Yes, I think they had," said the other, looking as safe to approach as he ever could be, for he was in high good humour at the morning's work. "Have you the paper you spoke of?"

"Yes, monsieur," said De Beaurepaire. "Here is a letter from De Beaurepaire, inquiring whether his own person would be accepted for that of his daughter." And he produced one which he had written that morning.

"Ah, well," said Robespierre, "that will do." And they walked on in silence till they turned into the Rue de la Sourdière. Opening the door by a pass-key, Robespierre led the way into a small room opening out of the drawing-room,

which seemed to be his study. "Sit down a moment," he said. "I could not, of course, give you the document, because I have no authority. I am but a poor citizen, M. de Brissac—a simple lover of my nation—but I got one from the secretary this morning—poor fellow, he is in prison now." And he took it out of an escritoire. "Read it, M. de Brissac."

De Beaurepaire read it. "M. Naudet is directed to liberate Madame Duchenier née Beaurepaire, now in confinement at S. Lazare, as soon as he shall be in possession of the person of M. de Beaurepaire, if he shall surrender himself within ten days from this time. June 2, 1793."—The document was properly signed, countersigned, and sealed.

"I am obliged to you, M. Robespierre," said De Beaurepaire, rising. "I will forward this to De Beaurepaire; and I doubt not he will present himself within as short a time as possible."—At this moment there was a knock at the door.

"Good morning, M. de Brissac," said Robespierre; "that, I guess, is General Santerre. I expect him here this morning. He will be pleased to learn that his old enemy is in our hands."

De Beaurepaire made his exit with the utmost speed—to describe his horror at the intelligence is impossible. Just as he had succeeded beyond his utmost hopes, he felt that to meet Santerre would undo all he had done. He hurried down stairs, intending to step into the parlour which opened from the hall; but just as he had his foot on the lowest step, the door opened, and Santerre entered. De Beaurepaire endeavoured to pass him unnoticed.

"Halloo!" said the general. "Halloo, monsieur!"

"Monsieur!" said De Beaurepaire, disguising his voice, and speaking in a surprised and angry tone.

"M. de Beaurepaire!" gasped Santerre in a tone half of fury, half of astonishment.

"My name is De Brissac, monsieur," replied he, passing rapidly on—while the ex-brewer had not presence of mind to stop him—and making his escape from the door. Santerre looked for a moment disposed to stop him—hesitated—and then hurried up stairs.

"Why, M. Robespierre," he called out, "do you know what De Beaurepaire did to me?"

"Yes, general; and I hope that in a few days he will be safe enough. What's the matter? you look put out."

"In a few days safe enough! Why, I met him going down your stairs!"

"Met De Beaurepaire going down stairs! That man's De Brissac."

"Do you take me for a fool?" cried Santerre. "I tell you it was De Beaurepaire. I spoke to him myself."

"No! by all the devils!" cried Robespierre, catching at the bell. "Or, stay! run yourself, general. I will send some soldiers. Get into a hackney-coach, and ride to the Saint Lazare."

"Why? why?" cried the officer.

"He has cajoled me," cried Robespierre: "do as I tell you, or he will succeed; he will be at the Saint Lazare. I will be there nearly as soon as you." And Santerre, not above half understanding his errand, ran down stairs, and hurried to the nearest stand.

In the mean time, De Beaurepaire felt that all depended on his speed. He had scarcely any hope of succeeding; but he resolved to use every effort. Running down the street, he was fortunate enough to find a hackney-coach by the opera-house, with its head in the right direction.

"Two louis d'or," he cried, "if you set me down at the Saint Lazare in ten minutes!"

The coachman, urged by such an offer to unwonted speed, performed the distance under the given time; and De Beaurepaire, throwing himself from the carriage, and ringing the bell of the prison, awaited with considerable anxiety the arrival of the turnkey. In every carriage which he heard in the neighbouring streets he fancied the arrival of General Santerre; but at length steps were heard approaching along the avenue we have already described, the bolts were drawn back, the door was opened, and De Beaurepaire, with an eagerness which he could not disguise, demanded immediately to see Naudet. The turnkey accordingly led him into the little room which opened from the portico; and desiring him to

wait there for a moment, proceeded in search of his superior officer. Every minute seemed an age to the anxious father; every minute he expected to hear the bell, which he himself had just rung, announce the arrival of General Santerre. Nor were his apprehensions at all groundless; at that very moment, the general having procured a hackney-coach at the nearest stand, was hurrying along the least frequented streets, and had urged his coachman also by the promise of a handsome present. He was, however, fortunately detained, first by their being no coach at the Opera-house stand; and then by a stoppage in the Rue Cadet. Naudet, who guessed that the business might require his immediate attention, came at once to De Beaurepaire. "I have procured the order, M. Naudet," said the latter; "you will observe that this document"—and he produced it from his pocket—"is properly signed and sealed; and that it requires you to liberate Madame Duchenier as soon as M. de Beaurepaire shall have surrendered himself."

Naudet looked at the paper: and then said, "Am I to understand, M. de Beaurepaire, that you now wish to surrender yourself to my custody? because if so, I must call in one of the turnkeys, that the thing may be done in an official manner."

"Do what you like," replied M. de Beaurepaire; "only be quick; every moment is of importance to me."

"I understand," said Naudet; and, opening the door, he desired the man who had given admission to M. de Beaurepaire to step in.

"Pierre," he said, "this gentleman, who has been proscribed by the Convention, wishes to surrender himself, and to take his trial. Bring me the prison register, and be quick."

As soon as the turnkey was gone, "I will go up stairs," said Naudet, "and acquaint your daughter that you are here; and also that she is at liberty to go when and where she will."

"Whatever you do," answered De Beaurepaire, "take care not to give her a hint that I am a prisoner; I will manage all that myself."

"I will take care," said Naudet; and he left the room.

Almost at the same moment, the turnkey made his appearance with the register; and the gaoler came back. "She

will be here in a moment," he said; "and now, with your permission, we will make the entry." He accordingly seated himself at the high desk we have already mentioned; and, dipping his pen in the ink, inquired:

"Your christian and sirname?"

"Claude de Beaurepaire," replied that gentleman.

"Your residence?"

"Cerisay," was the answer.

"Your age?"

"Fifty-five," replied the prisoner.

"Very well," said Naudet; "and you surrender yourself this second day of June 1793. That is all correct. Take away the book, Pierre."

Almost as soon as the turnkey had gone, the door again opened, and Marie Duchenier hurried in. She threw herself into her father's arms, and would have asked him a thousand questions as to the method by which he had procured the order for her liberation; but he stopped her by speaking at once quickly and decidedly.

"My dear child," he said, "all this must be for another time; now if you wish the order to be of any use, you must put on your bonnet and shawl, and leave the prison at once. There; run up stairs directly, and be back again as quickly as possible. And do not mind about taking any thing with you; we can send for whatever you may want."

"If I were disposed to guess," said Naudet, when she had obeyed her father's orders — "I say," he repeated with a smile, "if I were disposed to guess, I should be likely to believe, M. de Beaurepaire, that the manner in which you have obtained this order will not bear looking into. However, that is no concern of mine; I have done my duty, and the Convention may blame me for it if they like. For aught I know, you may have procured the paper in the most straightforward method imaginable."

"I see," said De Beaurepaire, "that the report which I have always heard of you, M. Naudet, has only done you justice. It is a comfort to think that among the many prisons in this unfortunate city, there is one at least where the governor is a kind and generous man."

"Oh, I hope there are more than that," began Naudet; but he was interrupted by Marie Duchenier, whose anxiety to be free and to obey the wishes of her father had rendered her quicker than he could have expected. But she was not alone; for the pang she felt at her separation, necessary though it were, from the friend who had hitherto shared her dangers and her imprisonment, was fully sympathised with by Rose Le Grand. De Beaurepaire, with his natural politeness, shook hands with and inquired after the health of the latter, before he said, "Now, Marie, you must go at once; and what is more, you must go by yourself. Here is the direction to which you are to drive,"—he put a card into her hands,—"and you will find a hackney-coach waiting for you outside the gate."

"But, father," said Marie, "when are you coming yourself? I do not at all like leaving you alone here."

"Oh, never mind about me," replied De Beaurepaire, "I shall come by and by! All I want now is, that you should take yourself off."

"Rose," said Marie, throwing herself into her friend's arms, "I hardly think I could bear to leave you, were it not that I know how much more we can do for you when I am once out of this place, than we can while I am in it. I will never leave off ——"

"Yes, yes," said De Beaurepaire, in great agitation (for he thought that he heard the sound of some vehicle rattling furiously along the street which skirted the prison-wall), "I will say all that for you when you are gone; but now every moment's delay may be worth your life."

Almost by force he separated the two friends; and Marie Duchenier, entrusted to the care of the turnkey, walked down the avenue towards the prison-gate. Her father, in company with Rose Le Grand and Naudet, watched her as she went; but before she could reach the gate itself, the coach which M. de Beaurepaire had fancied that he heard, drove up, and the prison-bell was rung with great violence. De Beaurepaire retired into the little room where he had surrendered himself; Rose followed him; and Naudet merely saying, "Why, what's in the wind now?" took a few steps towards the gate.

"Now, Mademoiselle Le Grand," said De Beaurepaire, "you will soon know the reason why I was obliged to hurry poor Marie away from you so fast."

While he spoke, his heart was almost bursting with anxiety to know whether, after all, his daughter would have made her escape; or whether Santerre might have discovered the trick in time to prevent its success. However, he was soon relieved from his terror; for in a minute or two Santerre's voice was heard outside the portico. That officer, who had been unacquainted, as we have seen, with the nature of the deception practised by De Beaurepaire, had seen nothing extraordinary in a lady's leaving the prison, where she might have been visiting one of her friends; nor had he taken time to examine her features; nor perhaps, if he had, would he have recognised his former prisoner under another dress. When, however (which was not at once), from the inquiries he made of Naudet, as well as from the confession of De Beaurepaire himself, he discovered the trick, the republican general gave way to one of those bursts of fury for which he was notorious. He swore — he blasphemed — he threatened to deprive Naudet of his place—he vowed that he would bring De Beaurepaire to trial before he was a week older; and all this while Marie Duchenier was getting further from the scene of danger, and her father was therefore well pleased that the time which might have been occupied in her pursuit was wasted by Santerre in impotent expressions of fury.

De Beaurepaire had taken care to lay his scheme well. He had left a letter at his lodgings, explaining to Marie that he had sacrificed his own life for hers; that she was bound to make the best use of the liberty he had given her, and instead of wasting time in useless endeavours for him, to follow his directions implicitly; that Texier would make every arrangement for her immediate flight from Paris; and that she should take up her abode for the present with the royalist army, until its leaders should have provided some secure and settled place of refuge for the ladies and other women who were connected with the revolt.

Whether she obeyed these injunctions of M. de Beaurepaire the course of the history will shew.

CHAPTER XII.

We must now return to Charles Duchenier, whom we left a prisoner in the hands of the man called Oncques and his companions. Having got their horses together, and procured another from the stables, they made no secret of their destination; and Charles heard that he was to be conveyed to Nantes with more terror than that with which he would have received the intimation that he was bound to Paris. For, by this separation from his companions, he was cut off from the possibility of assisting or cheering them; while his own life, he felt assured, would equally be sacrificed to the hatred of the republicans, to whichever of the two places he might be conveyed. His captors reckoned on being able, by using extreme diligence, to reach Nantes the following night. And as the north-western portion of Poitou had less decidedly declared itself in favour of the royal cause, they considered that to carry their prisoner through that part of the country would be a work of no great difficulty. Duchenier was accordingly mounted, in spite of his entreaties that, whatever his captors were determined to do with him, he might at least be permitted to speak once more with the ladies, whom they had also made prisoners. To this request Oncques, as might be expected, turned a deaf ear; and Duchenier, having been properly secured, and attended by Oncques himself on one side, and by the stoutest of his companions on the other, was compelled to ride from the castle of Cerisay, ignorant of the fate of those whom he left behind, and far more certain of his own.

It happened, as we have already said, that the poor family whom, on leaving Cerisay, Father Laval was called to visit, lived at the extremity of a lane leading from the road to Nantes. Having accomplished his errand, the good priest

was returning towards the village; and as the sick child with whom he had been, was likely to do well, he had both left its parents and felt himself in higher spirits than such a visit might have been supposed to occasion. Unfortunately, however, for himself, he had been much longer than he anticipated; and as he approached the village, the clock of the little church struck twelve. At the same time, in the direction of Cerisay, he heard the sound of horses approaching; and somewhat wondering what business could occasion any travellers to be pursuing their journey at so untimely an hour, he nevertheless proceeded without the slightest apprehension, well knowing that the whole of the surrounding country was in the possession of the royalists, and was supposed to be entirely quiet. By this time the moon had risen; so that Oncques and his companions, on approaching the priest, were perfectly able to distinguish his dress and character. Charles Duchenier also recognised his friend; but knowing that to address him might ruin the priest, and could not benefit himself, he resolved to give no sign of that recognition. Father Laval, on the contrary, who was more completely taken by surprise, as soon as he had satisfied himself that (which at first he could not believe) the prisoner was none other than Charles Duchenier, stepped up to his horse's head, and addressed him instantly. "My son," he said, "what is the meaning of all this? who are these soldiers?" And he was proceeding to ask more questions, when Oncques put an end to his inquiries.

"Old gentleman," he cried, "we don't want to hurt you unless we are obliged; so pass on, and ask no questions, and no one here will touch you."

"But I will ask questions," replied the priest; "I have a right to ask them: who are you that are presuming to carry off this officer, engaged as you know, or may know, on his Majesty's service?"

"Leave me alone, good father," replied Duchenier; "don't think of me; but go down to the castle, and if you can, do something for poor Marie. Another pack of these fellows have got hold of her, and I fear mean to carry her to Paris."

"I will, my son, — I will," answered Father Laval, who saw that he could by no possibility help Duchenier; and he was about to hurry off towards the village, when the man called Chemillé seized him by the collar.

"Shall I blow his brains out?" he inquired of Oncques.

"Stay a minute," cried that personage; "they have set a price on the head of such fellows as he, and I don't see why we should not have him along with us too."

Father Laval, who was a strong man, made so violent an effort to release himself as nearly to unhorse Chemillé; and another of the ruffians rode up and assisted in securing him.

"The only difficulty," said Oncques, "is where to get a horse for him; however, for the present he must be content to ride behind the other prisoner, and we will even make free with the next horse we can lay hands on."

Another horse, of a somewhat inferior description, was soon procured from the next village-green, where he was quietly grazing; and Oncques and his party pursued their way, without once resting, till sunrise. Then, after refreshing their horses and themselves in a small roadside inn near Moine, they again rode forward till the heat of the day compelled them to pause, about ten miles on the southern side of Nantes. As they were not desirous of trusting themselves in any village, having good reason to believe that the royalist spirit of the peasantry might prompt them to liberate the prisoners, they preferred resting in a little wood of old oak-trees, which may still be seen about a hundred yards to the right of the road from Montfaucon to Nantes. They tethered their horses in the shade, desired their prisoners to dismount, and, after securing them to one of the trees, themselves lay down for an hour's repose. One of the party was left at the entrance of the wood as a kind of watch, to provide against a possible surprise; but as he was at a distance from the rest, Father Laval and Duchenier had for the first time that day the opportunity of exchanging a few words. They had, indeed, attempted to do so more than once, in the course of their journey; but such attempts had always been met with an immediate order from Oncques to keep silent.

"Now, my son," said the priest in a low voice, "that we have the opportunity of speaking, let us make the best of it; and tell me all about this sad change."

Duchenier told all that he could. "I know no more than this; Marie and Mademoiselle Le Grand had retired for the night; I was alone in the winter-parlour, and was just about to go up stairs, when I heard a shriek from one of the bedrooms. I rushed to the door, and in a moment was in the hands of these fellows. From what I have heard, I imagine that they design to make a bargain of us with the national troops; but why they have separated us, or how they got into the castle, or who they are, or what set them on this villany, I know no more, father, than you do. It is very clear what the end will be, so far as I am concerned; but only think what Marie's sufferings must be."

"My son," replied the father, "I have good hopes, from the very greatness of your trial, that you will be in some marvellous manner delivered from it. Think only of the cause for which you are suffering, and for which also she is suffering. I can give you no better comfort than that. Whatever it may please GOD to order with respect to you in this world, you yourself, and she for whom you are grieving, have a reward safely laid up in the next."

"But think," replied Duchenier, "of the end of that journey to Paris for her; think of all the long imprisonment, and the mockery of a trial, and then the guillotine. O father, if you had ever felt the same affection, you would tell better how to sympathise with the same grief."

"I know," said Father Laval, "I know, my son, how easy it is to talk of the duty of trusting to GOD to take care of those who have been engaged in His cause; and I know, also, how miserably cold all human comfort must seem at such a time. But I never yet heard of any easy way of getting to heaven; and sure I am that the most easy ways are not the most safe. If He calls you, and if He calls her too, in any degree to follow the saints and martyrs of whom the church teaches us in this world, so much the more may we expect to have a portion with them in the world to come."

"What's that about the world to come?" cried Chemillé,

who had been half asleep when the conversation had begun. "That's one of the old stories; we know better than that now. It has served to put money in your pocket for a good while now; so you can't complain if the trick is found out at last."

"I trust, my son," replied Father Laval, "that the world of which you now speak so lightly will be held by you, before you die, as something infinitely more precious than any other possession."

"Well, father," said Chemillé, yawning, "I won't argue the point, for the long ride has made me sleepy. However, it is a hard thing if poor wretches like you may not look forward to the next world, for it is uncommonly little more of this that you are likely to have."

So saying, he turned on his side, and went to sleep. Father Laval endeavoured, and not without some success, to comfort Duchenier under his affliction. He pointed out that the intelligence of Marie's capture must of necessity soon reach the royalist army; and that none could doubt that the leaders would strain every nerve to effect her release. He pointed out, too, that very possibly some friendly party of peasants might already have accomplished that release; and shewed, not without considerable truth, that for so small a body of men to attempt to convey two prisoners through a friendly country was an enterprise very hazardous in itself, and very likely to be defeated. In such conversation the time passed on; and when it drew towards six o'clock, Oncques, arousing himself from sleep, called together his companions, and gave orders that the journey should be continued. It was resumed accordingly, in the same manner as before; and in about an hour and a half the party had mounted the last hill that looked down upon the Loire.

It was a beautiful scene, had Father Laval or Duchenier been at liberty to observe it. The sun had just set; the broad river reflected the red light of the western sky; the city of Nantes, rising proudly on the opposite side, with its innumerable spires, glowed richly in the departing sunlight; while the tri-coloured flag that waved from the summit of the disused and ruinous castle, told too plainly that the citizens of

that fair town had deserted their king, betrayed their country, and forsworn their GOD. As the evening grew darker, and the party descended the hill, the quays, parades, and public places of the town were kindled into a thousand lights; and when at length they stood on the beach, and the twilight had thickened around them, the form of the city had grown hazy and indistinct, while the countless lamps spoke of its industry and wealth.

Some little time was lost in waiting for the ferry; nor was it till ten o'clock that the party were landed on the *Quai de la Revolution*. Oncques, who was unacquainted with the place, had some difficulty in learning whither he was to take his prisoners. At length one of the National Guard informed him that a portion of the old townhall had been set apart for the reception of all persons suspected of royalism. "But I doubt," concluded the man, "whether there is room for any more, for they have already squeezed three hundred into a place not meant to hold a hundred and twenty."

With this information, Oncques was enabled to make his way to the place in question, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, and the dimness of the back streets. The townhall itself was a building erected in the time of Louis Quatorze, and possessing some claim, or at least making some pretensions, to propriety of design. But towards the beginning of the reign of Louis the Sixteenth, the increasing trade of Nantes had obliged the municipal authorities to undertake the erection of additional rooms. The latter were hardly more than half completed when the troubles began which terminated in the Revolution. The unfinished buildings formed a kind of small quadrangle, partly bounded by buildings one story high, and partly by walls. Into this quadrangle, and into these buildings, the royalist prisoners were thrust, without distinction of age or sex, like sheep into a pen; the only consideration which seemed to present itself to the infamous Carrier, then commander-in-chief of the republican troops in Nantes, being the simple question, how many human bodies could be compressed into a given space.

On arriving at the gate of this temporary prison, Oncques requested to speak to the gaoler; and that person was ac-

cordingly summoned. His name was Tarne; he was a faithful assistant of Carrier in all his diabolical schemes, and may claim his full share in those *Noyades de Nantes* which have consigned the republican general's name to such a miserable immortality. To Tarne, then, Oncques explained the circumstances under which he appeared, and the value of the prisoners by whom he was accompanied; and from that official he received the very satisfactory promise, that his claims to reward would assuredly meet with General Carrier's early consideration. Oncques, indeed, had at first attempted to make some kind of bargain with the gaoler, being unwilling, as he expressed himself, to write goods delivered on one side of his account unless he could balance it with value received on the other. But though a man of resolution and enterprise in his own way, he soon found that his best chance of being paid at all consisted in trusting to the republican generosity of Carrier; and having come to that conclusion, he retired for the night, with his companions, to a small inn just opposite the townhall.

In the mean time Father Laval and Duchenier were ushered through manifold passages, which composed part of the old building, into the place destined for their reception; Tarne consoling them with the reflection, that though they were then unfortunately very full, the place would be considerably emptier by the next night. Although the particulars of the September massacres, and other atrocities of the same kind, had found their way into La Vendée; and though Carrier was well known to resemble, if indeed, which some asserted, he were not, an incarnate fiend; still the two prisoners were almost overwhelmed at the first sight of the misery they beheld on entering the quadrangle. The little apartments had been assigned to as many of the ladies as could, by any possibility, be crammed into them; but in the court, under the open air, on straw, on mud, or on heaps of filth, the rest of the prisoners, men, women, and children, were compelled to sleep. It was a strange contrast — the squalid misery, the terror, the insufferable stench, the crying of children, the querulous complaints of men well nigh in their dotage, the vain attempts of mothers to hush their

little ones to sleep, and the silent wretchedness with which the father of a family looked on those he best loved—it was a strange contrast with the glorious sky above, the unclouded moon, the few stars that ventured to peep through the flood of radiance which she was pouring down—and the two tall towers of Saint Jean, which, glittering with inexpressible beauty, looked down on the very walls of the prison.

The entrance of two additional prisoners was hardly noticed by the greater part of those already in confinement; and when Tarne left them, saying, "You must go to sleep where best you can; or, if you prefer it, you can stay awake," Duchenier and his companion sat down against the wall, close to the door by which they had entered, and for a few moments gazed around them without saying a single word. Close to them was a venerable old peasant, who had been seized on suspicion of having been concerned in M. de la Charrette's motions on the northern side the Loire. He, too, was seated on the ground, and leaning against the wall; and at the same time supported on his broad shoulder the head of a girl, who, from her attitude of confidence in him, could be mistaken for none but his daughter. At the end of a few moments the old man spoke to his new companions.

"Father," he said, in a low voice, as if fearful of rousing his child from her slumbers, "this is a sad place to a newcomer; but GOD'S will be done."

"Ay," said Father Laval, "I thought that I knew something of the wickedness of men before I came here; but this teaches me more than I could have dreamt of. Are all these prisoners confined on a charge of royalism?"

"Oh, yes," said the old man; "there are some felons in the townhall, but they have very comfortable rooms. But if you were to be a prisoner any where, GOD be thanked that they have brought you here; for there is not another priest in the place."

"I am glad, then, my son," replied Father Laval, "that the little remainder of my life is likely to be useful. How long have these people been thus confined?"

"Some of them," answered the old man, whose name was Jaques Chollet, "as much as three days. We were only

brought in here this morning. But forgive me, father, if I ask you one question,—I do not think I need, either: are you a constitutional priest?"

"Thank God, no, my son," answered Father Laval; "if I had been, I should not have been here."

Chollet, on receiving this answer, told all his little story: how his family consisted of a son and the daughter who slept by him; how his son had joined the army of De la Charrette, and had won the good opinion both of that general and of the subordinate officers; how he himself would have joined the insurgents, had it not been, he said, "for poor Louise here;" and how that very morning, a detachment of the regiment commonly known by, and rather glorying in the name of "the infernal," had amused themselves by burning the villages in the direction of Poix, and, among fifty or sixty other prisoners, had brought himself and his daughter into Nantes.

Father Laval, not unused to tales of distress, comforted the poor man to the best of his power; and even Duchenier's attention was somewhat distracted from his own griefs by the afflictions of the peasant. But the intelligence he yet had to communicate was of still greater importance.

"Well, father, well," he said, "it will be but for a very short time; for we are to have a gaol-delivery to-morrow; and they do say, who ought to know, that it will be much such an one as there was last September in Paris."

"Impossible!" cried Duchenier; "Carrier may have the will for such atrocities, but the Convention itself would revolt at it."

"Oh, you don't know, monsieur," replied Chollet, "what they dare to do here! It was but two days ago that they put some five-and-twenty persons on board a vessel, with three great leaks in it, and then they launched it into the river; and that they call republican baptism. Ay, they do things that it makes one's blood run cold to tell. They strip men and women, tie them together, and fling them into the Loire; and that they call republican marriage. They dare to do any thing here that the devil himself can teach them; for I am sure they could have learnt of none other but him."

In conversation such as this, an hour or an hour and a

half passed away; but then, notwithstanding the misery of their situation, Father Laval and Duchenier were fairly overpowered by the fatigue and excitement of their journey, and the sleeplessness of the preceding night; and they contrived to enjoy some slumber, such as it was.

It was towards seven o'clock that the priest was aroused by Chollet; and looking around him he saw that the prisoners had received some intelligence which seemed to occasion universal agitation.

"What is it?" he exclaimed; "is there any news?"

"It is just as I told you," answered Chollet; "they have sent in to say that the commission for trying us will sit in the course of half an hour; and we all know what that means. Hark! don't you hear the people outside the wall?"

Notwithstanding the exclamations and murmurs of his fellow-prisoners, Father Laval could not but catch the yells of the populace, assembled in the great Place de Saint Jean, to be spectators of the various trials, and executors of the sentences which were sure to follow.

"They say," continued the old man, "that it is not for us only, but for the poor fellows down at the prison de l'Eperonnière; they are to be brought up here, it seems."

Duchenier was roused by the conversation, and soon understood what was anticipated. "It is very clear," he said, "what will be the end in my case; but, father, I trust that, for all our sakes, you will be spared."

"Do not hope it, my son," replied Father Laval; "my being a priest, as things go, will be sufficient for them. But I must not stand talking here, when so many among us have but a few hours before they will be called to a tribunal more terrible than this."

"And more just also, father," said old Chollet.

"More just, my son, and also more merciful; or else we were truly of all men the most miserable.—How is it with you, my daughter?" he inquired of Louise, who had hid her face in her hands, and only gave proof of her agitation by trembling excessively.

"It is a hard thing," he continued, not receiving any answer; "or rather, it seems a hard thing to be called away

just at the time when every thing in life seems brightest and fairest, as it does to you, my daughter. But think only, what have we not to be thankful for, when we know that we might, at this moment, have been preparing ourselves to try, instead of to be tried; and to be murderers instead of sufferers? But I will talk to you again presently."

So saying, he mingled among the prisoners; and wherever grief seemed to be most violent, there was the priest also at hand to sooth it, or to turn it into the right channel. In the mean time, Chollet and Duchenier maintained a desultory conversation, broken by intervals of gloomy silence. The cries of the mob grew louder, and came oftener; and in one of the rooms of the townhall, that which was entered from the court, there was the noise of workmen, as if some kind of preparation was being made for the sitting of the commission. At length, two or three heavy vehicles seemed to be driven up in front of the townhall; and immediately the crowd united in a long and savage cheer.

"That must be the prisoners from L'Eperonnière," observed a young man, who was standing close to Duchenier. "I wish, monsieur, that some one of us could find the means of looking over the wall, and seeing what is going on."

"That might easily be done," answered Duchenier; "look, the putlog-holes are left in several places; and a tall man might be helped up, so as to be able to look over the top."

This idea seemed to excite some interest in several of the standers-by; and one or two voices exclaimed, "Let us try it, by all means."

"You had better let me try it," said the young man who had first spoken, and whose name was Dreux; "I have had some experience in that sort of thing."

Accordingly the speaker was hoisted up, till he was able to place his foot in the lowest hole; and then he contrived to elevate himself to the necessary height. As soon as ever his head appeared above the wall, there was a cry among the mob, "A prisoner is escaping!"

"No, no, gentlemen," replied Dreux, who took the matter with infinite coolness; "I mean no offence,—but I can't

say that you look such pleasant company as to make me wish myself among you. I am very well off, I assure you, where I am."

"What do you see?" inquired more than one voice in the court.

"See!" exclaimed Dreux, "I have not seen so many heads together since I was *Valere* in the *Malade Imaginaire*. See! why, all the tag, rag, and bob-tail of the town; or, as my very excellent friend Maximilien Robespierre would call them, the glorious sons of enlightened and liberated France. But I'll tell you what," he continued, leaning downwards, and speaking in a somewhat lower voice; "there are more daggers among them than I like to see any where, except on the stage."

"You see, monsieur, you see," cried Chollet, "it will be September over again."

"Nay, nay, my good friend," replied Duchenier, "we must not make the worst of the matter. But if it were really so," he continued, after a pause, "then I for one should say, Let us stand all together, and sell our lives as dearly as we can. It would surely be better to be swept down with cannon, as they did at the Bicêtre, than to be given over, one by one, to be butchered by the mob."

"So I say," cried more than one voice.

Just as this conclusion seemed to be becoming universal, the governor of the prison entered, and endeavoured to obtain a hearing. He was a short, somewhat stout and sleek personage: his hair black, and arranged with more care than was usually bestowed upon it by the Jacobins, and his voice by no means unpleasing, though giving the impression of servility and fawningness.

"Gentlemen," he began, "gentlemen, it is my duty to inform you,—really this noise is very unpleasant,—to inform you, gentlemen, that General Carrier,—upon my word, I fear I do not make myself heard, but it is not my fault,—that General Carrier, anxious to spare you the unnecessary delay and inconvenience of a journey to Paris—Monsieur, may I trouble you to descend from that position," he continued to Dreux; "I don't in the least suspect any thing; but our

friends outside may not like it,—of a journey to Paris, has obtained authority from the Convention,"—and at every word he spoke, the silence in the court became greater,—"to hold a commission for your trial in this place. Your names will be called over alphabetically; and I can assure you that every capability of defence will be allowed you by the president and the board. They are almost ready to commence their sitting; and I trust your good sense will prevent any unnecessary delay, as each person is summoned."

"Monsieur," replied Dreux, with great gravity, "we are infinitely obliged to you for the notice. Permit me, however, to observe in the first place, that it is rather of the shortest; and in the second, that, as a good many of us will have no supper to-night, it is the more desirable that we should have some breakfast this morning."

"I will see, monsieur, what can be done," replied the governor, who was called Levrier. "Is there any thing else that I can do to make any lady or gentleman comfortable?"

There was a kind of indignant murmur among the prisoners, which seemed to make Levrier, tyrant though he were, and shackled as they were, feel that there might be a point beyond which his victims would not endure to be tormented; he therefore returned to the gaol, and left the royalists to a quarter of an hour's miserable suspense.

"My children," said Father Laval at length, taking advantage of a moment's general silence, "there can be no doubt that, ere long, many of us will have been called to appear before the judgment-seat of GOD. I call on you all now, while yet time is given you for repentance, to acknowledge that, however unjust may be your sentence as regards men, as regards GOD our enemies cannot inflict the half that we have deserved. I call upon you to look stedfastly at Him Who has Himself passed through deeper sorrows than those which He now calls us to endure; Who stood before more unjust judges, Who was exposed to a more furious mob, Who was deserted by all, and yet Who suffered not, as we do, for His own faults, but for ours. 'We, indeed, justly,' my children. I call upon you to put all your trust in Him, both now and at the hour of your trial; look to His merits, and to

the prayers of our Lady and of the Saints. I call upon you to pray for your enemies—they need your prayers—and to forgive them with all your heart, and with all your soul, even as you hope for forgiveness yourselves. And now I am ready to bestow, on such as desire it, that absolution which Holy Church gives to the desire as well as to the act of confession; bidding you only to remember, that you may trifle with me as to the truth of your penitence here, but there will be no paltering with Him before Whom some of you are so soon about to appear."

The greater number of the prisoners fell on their knees, and thus received the absolution which the priest pronounced. A few—whether such as were involved in the miserable infidelity of the day, or were unhappily not in the fold of the Church, though professedly Christian, stood apart, respectfully, till it was finished—and then Father Laval resumed his labours of consolation among the prisoners.

CHAPTER XIII.

As the great clock of Saint Jean struck eight, the door which led from the prison to the court was thrown open, and Levrier, making his appearance for the second time, said: "Gentlemen, I have to announce to you that the commission is opened. The first name that I find on my list is Etienne Arnauld."

There was deep silence in the court; but no one stepped forward to answer to the name. "Etienne Arnauld," again shouted Levrier; still no one stirred. "There is no mistake, is there?" said the gaoler to Tarne, who stood by.

"Oh, none in the world," replied that officer, "unless the prisoner has made away with himself in the night;" and he proceeded to vociferate the name, three or four times. At last, from the very furthest end of the court emerged a pale, sickly-looking boy, apparently about fifteen; and, while the prisoners made way for him, right and left, to pass, with the true selfishness of human nature, he crept up to Levrier. "Are you Etienne Arnauld?" said the gaoler, in no very gentle voice.

"I am, monsieur," replied the boy, trembling.

"Then, why on earth," growled Tarne, "did you not say so at once? I promise you it will be all the worse for you in there." And the poor boy would have been dragged in, without one kind voice, or one kind hand, to encourage him —for he had no friends in the prison—had not Father Laval stepped up to him, and said: "GOD bless you, my son, and give you a good hearing."

"They will never," cried Charles Duchenier, "touch a boy like that."

"GOD grant you be a true prophet, monsieur," replied Chollet; "we shall see."

"I wonder," said the actor, "how long they give a man for his defence? They will be weeks in getting through all of us."

"I wish they would be," answered Chollet; "but never you think that."

As he spoke, there came a pitiable shriek, or rather succession of shrieks, from the outside of the walls; and then a kind of yell from the mob.

"You see," cried the peasant, shrugging his shoulders.

"What!" cried Duchenier; "you don't mean that that was the prisoner who went out not half a minute ago?"

But his question was answered by the re-appearance of Levrier.

"Now, then," cried the gaoler, "Jean Bonfin?"

Warned by the fate of his predecessor, the person now summoned, who seemed a respectable yeoman, walked forward at once. "Farewell, gentlemen," he said; "I don't expect to see you any more in this world. Your blessing, father." And Father Laval gave it.

Two or three minutes followed, during which time Dreux, assisted by one or two of the other prisoners, mounted to the top of the wall, as before; and saying, "Your servant, gentlemen," nodded in a familiar manner to the mob. The crowd were just then in a state resembling that of a gorged tiger, not indisposed to be playful; and they saluted the actor with one or two expressions of approbation. But notwithstanding all his assumed courage, Dreux turned pale, and felt sick at heart; for, in the midst of a little circle, formed by the crowd round the side gate of the prison, lay the body of the boy that had left the court not five minutes before, literally hacked to pieces with the daggers of the mob; the men and women—for there were almost as many of the latter as of the former—who stood nearest being sprinkled from head to foot with his blood. Stooping beneath the wall, he told his friends what he saw; and almost at the same moment Levrier entered for a third prisoner.

"Louise Bonnechose," he cried.

There seemed to be some difficulty in finding the person inquired for; and in the mean time Dreux kept his station,

and watched the gate, to see what would happen to the last prisoner. He saw it open; he saw Tarne and two of the national guard push the unfortunate man out in spite of his struggles, which were very violent; and wrenching his arm from the gate-post, round which he had flung it, they thrust him into the mob, and shut the door. In a moment, those who stood nearest fell upon him; some with daggers, and some with swords; and Dreux remarked that his struggles, and more especially the natural impulse by which he raised his hands to protect his head, seemed very much to protract his sufferings. But his attention was presently called to what was going on within.

"Dead, is she?" said Levrier, "and a good thing too; it will spare her and the commissioners some trouble; I'll take care that it is not a sham, presently. But now for the next: Jacques Charpentier." And a young artisan, who was imbued with the infidel principles of the age, came forward at once. Without bidding any one good bye, or taking any other notice of Father Laval than by a little friendly nod, (for the good priest had placed himself close to the door by which the prisoners went out,) he merely said, "The comfort is, that when one's head is off, it can't ache, as mine does now;" and so he went out.

"I suppose," said Chollet, "that my turn will come next; and then, Louise, you must be prepared for yours."

Father Laval came up, and spoke a few words in a low tone to both father and daughter. Duchenier had in the mean time discovered that, by listening under a window, near to the door which we have just mentioned, he could catch something of what was going on. He heard the prisoner speak; he heard one or two other voices, which he took to be those of the commissioners; he heard a short laugh, or rather chuckle, from the artisan, who seemed to have delivered himself, by way of bravado, of something intended for wit; and then a gruff voice said, "Let the prisoner be set at liberty forthwith."

"He is acquitted, he is acquitted!" cried Duchenier; and the news spread almost as by intuition among his companions. But in about half a minute they heard the same kind of

shriek that had so terrified them at first; and Dreux, looking down, said: "Acquitted, or not acquitted, they are putting him to death."

"I have heard," said a gentleman who stood by, and who seemed to have belonged to the army, "that in the September massacres, a condemned prisoner was always ordered to be set at liberty; because it made him walk quietly off, and spared the gaolers some trouble."

Levrier came out again. "Now, then, father," whispered Chollet, "if it is my turn, give me your prayers till it is all over." But the gaoler cried, "The next name is Louise Chollet."

"It must be mine, monsieur," said the peasant, stepping up. "My name is Jean, and that must come before Louise."

"Ay, well, I see," answered Levrier; "it's a mistake. However, as the girl's name comes first, we'll have her first."

And Louise, after giving her father one embrace, went in as firmly as any of the preceding prisoners.

"Now I am about it," said Levrier, "I'll just look after that lady who is said to be dead. I've known such dead people come to life again; and that you know, old gentleman," clapping Father Laval on the back, "is contrary to law. Death, you know, is voted an eternal sleep." So saying, and with a laugh at his own jest, he passed on to the low range of buildings which we have already mentioned as bounding the further side of the court.

A lady, of one of the first families of Poitou, met him at the door of one of the hovels, and said, "Monsieur, if you really wish to satisfy yourself of the death of my poor friend, you may easily do it by stepping in there. She died in my arms, about four o'clock this morning."

Levrier accordingly went in; and in one corner of the little apartment, decently covered with a silk cloak, lay the corpse. He just raised the arm, and finding it stiff and cold, "Ay, very well," he said, and came out again.

"It must soon be over, father, it must soon be over," said poor Chollet, who had imagined that he entertained not a hope of either his daughter's or his own safety; but when it

came to the point, found himself in all the agonies of suspense; "they have been a very long time. Oh, do you think ——"

The priest, who had evidently been engaged in prayer, said quietly, "My son, unto GOD the LORD belong the issues from death."

"I know they do, I know they do," replied Chollet. "I will trust Him."

"I can hear nothing," said Duchenier, "from the window, they are speaking so very low."

By this time Levrier had re-entered the prison; and Dreux, then looking down from his place, said, "I'll tell you what, gentlemen, I suppose no one wishes to suffer more than they need. It's my opinion, that those who have gone out by that door made it all the worse by trying to save themselves with their hands. I recommend whoever may come next to hold his hands down. Take my word for it, it would be much sooner over."

"You say well," said the military gentleman, to whom we have before referred. "But what a long time this examination lasts! I hope," he continued, with more politeness than could have been expected from an aristocrat to a peasant, "it may be a good sign."

"Thank you, monsieur," was all that Chollet could say, whose agitation was strangely contrasted with the deep, but not stoical, repose of Father Laval's face.

A pause of two or three minutes more ensued, during which time the priest seemed wrapped in prayer; Duchenier listened with intense eagerness, but to no purpose; and Dreux, on the top of the wall, whistled *Ça ira.*

He had not, however, pursued that occupation very long, before the gate of the townhall again opened, and Louise Chollet came forth, accompanied by Levrier himself.

"Citizens," he said, "the republic takes this prisoner under her protection;" and, without further words, he re-entered the townhall.

Dreux was amazed to find that one sentence seemed effectually to bridle the passions of so bloodthirsty a mob; just as at a previous time a tri-coloured ribbon suspended across the

street had been found ample protection for Louis the Sixteenth and his family. The mob opened to allow the peasant girl to pass; but whither she went Dreux did not wait to see. The next moment he was at the side of old Chollet, to congratulate him on this unhoped-for deliverance. Then the old man's agitation was completely at an end, and he waited his own summons as calmly as if it had called him to the most indifferent action in the world.

"My son," said Father Laval to Duchenier, when the peasant had gone in, "your turn will come so soon, that if you have any message to leave or wish to express, you had better select three or four among your fellow-prisoners for the chance that one of them may survive. No man will refuse, under the circumstances, to charge himself with such an errand."

"To what purpose?" asked Duchenier, sadly. "If you survive, as I trust you will, you will explain every thing that needs to be explained; and if, by any chance, M. de Beaurepaire and the others should be yet ignorant of the destination of Marie, you will be able to inform them. Other message I have none to send."

"They are bringing him out," cried Dreux, a few minutes afterwards. And it was true that the old peasant had condemned himself by his first answer; for when asked if he had not a son then serving with Monsieur de la Charrette, he scorned to equivocate, and no other question was put. The commissioners thus thrust him out, as they thought, to certain destruction; but the mob were to give one of those rare proofs, which sometimes occurred during the history of the period, that they still retained a few human feelings. Louise, almost bewildered at her own preservation, had merely advanced a few steps into the crowd, and then waited to see what would become of her father. When she beheld him driven out on to the very swords of the assassins, she broke through the persons standing immediately before her, and throwing her arms round his neck, exclaimed, "You shall kill me before you can touch him."

The men who surrounded him had yet feeling left to admire her devotion; they held back irresolute whether to

strike or not; a straw would have turned the balance either way; when Dreux, from the top of his parapet, called out, "Vive la générosité;" and the mob, with an involuntary cheer, allowed the old man and his daughter to pass out quietly.

In the mean time another victim had been summoned by the commission; it was the lady who had informed Levrier of the fate of Madame Bonnechose. She had passed Father Laval, merely saying, "My husband is in the Catholic army, so I have nothing to hope." And she spoke too truly: and even Dreux held his hands before his eyes during the massacre of the first woman who had that day fallen a sacrifice to republicanism.

"Poor thing, poor thing!" he said, as he came down towards Duchenier, to whom he appeared to have taken a fancy. "Now, monsieur," he continued, "do let me intreat you, if you find yourself in circumstances to require my advice, to remember what I said just now. Put your hands in your pockets, or behind your back, or any where but just over your head; depend upon it, you will find it the most comfortable way."

"I am much obliged to you for the interest you take in me," replied Duchenier, almost provoked to a smile by the manner in which the actor spoke.

"My son," began Father Laval, "only remember that the great thing is ——" but he was interrupted by the voice of Levrier thundering out, "Jules Dreux."

Dreux made a polite but somewhat theatrical bow to the prisoners generally, laid his hand on his heart to Duchenier particularly, and went off, saying, "It's not so bad as the first going from the greenroom on to the stage, though it's my first appearance in this character. Enter Jules Dreux, and a gaoler;" and as he went away he chuckled to himself at his joke.

"Poor fellow!" said Father Laval; "that is what comes of modern principles." He had scarcely spoken when from the commission-room there came a loud burst of laughter, so unusual a sound, that every one in that part of the court turned to listen for something to explain it.

"I will mount the wall," said the military gentleman, "if any one will help me. I hope that fellow will get off." And with the assistance of one or two others, he did as he proposed.

"Your turn will be the next, I suppose, my son," said the priest. "Now remember, GOD helps those that help themselves; make the best you can of your cause; you may come through, after all. Don't throw your life away desperately."

"I will do all I can, father," replied Duchenier, "to save it, though to what good purpose I can hardly see. However, no man has a right to lay down what GOD has given him, till He calls for it."

"All's right, all's right!" shouted the officer from the wall. "He is under the protection of the republic; they are making way for him, and he seems laughing and joking as he goes."

Duchenier hardly heard this intelligence; for his eyes were fixed on the door towards the commission-room, as he firmly believed that his summons was now coming. And accordingly Levrier came forth, and called for "Charles Duchenier." He wrung Father Laval's hand, received his blessing, followed the gaoler, and the door closed upon him, which seemed to shut him off, like that in the *Inferno* of Dante, from hope. He followed Levrier but five or six steps, and then found himself in a long low white-washed room. At the upper end stood a table, with a green-baize cloth, strewed with pens and sheets of paper. At this table sat the five commissioners, Carrier occupying the chair; while the lower part of the room was filled with magistrates' clerks, the officials of the prison, and a few national soldiers. Two of the latter attended Duchenier to the place where the president motioned him to stand, about a couple of yards from the table; and then the examination began.

"Your name?" said Carrier, whose malignant expression of countenance was heightened by the enormous moustachios which hung down over his mouth, like dried grass over some foul cave.

"Charles Duchenier," he replied.

"Ay, yes, so it is," said the president; "an aristocrat, of course?"

"Really, Monsieur le Général, I do not clearly comprehend your question. If you mean by an aristocrat an enemy to liberty, then I beg leave to deny the name."

While he spoke, the four assistant commissioners appeared to take not the slightest interest in the matter before them. The two to the right of Carrier were talking to each other on some subject which appeared to occupy their whole thoughts: of those on his left, one was asleep, and the other drawing figures on a sheet of paper before him, among which Duchenier's quick eye caught the representation of a guillotine.

"Oh, an enemy to liberty," cried Carrier; "then I am afraid there is but one way for you; what say you, Le Gendre?"

"Upon my word, monsieur," said Duchenier, forcing a smile, "this matter is of considerable importance to me, and one does not like to lose one's life through a mistake."

"Well, that's true, too," said the president, somewhat disarmed by the other's good humour. "But what mistake?"

"I said," proceeded Duchenier, "that I had always professed myself the friend of liberty; and that if, in inquiring whether I were an aristocrat, you hinted this not to be the case, I certainly am no aristocrat."

"Ah," said the president, "every one says that they are fond of liberty, when they have none of their own; but the question is, were you, or were you not, engaged in the Vendean army?"

"If that is the question," answered Duchenier firmly, "I can only reply that I was."

"We need give ourselves no further trouble, Pelletier," observed Carrier, arousing the sleeping commissioner by poking him with his elbow.

"Eh! what!" cried the person addressed, starting up, and assuming a great appearance of wisdom; "no further trouble, did you say? Certainly not, the case is quite clear."

The three other commissioners laughed without any kind

of restraint; and Carrier, turning to the prisoner, observed, "We have agreed that, as it might possibly hurt the exquisite feelings of you aristocrats from La Vendée to be dealt with by our good friends the citizens of Nantes, we will keep you back a little, till we have a good boatful of you. Stand aside there.—You look to him, Chaumier," addressing one of the turnkeys.

Charles Duchenier was thus obliged for some two hours to be a spectator of that iniquitous commission. One by one he saw the prisoners brought in from the court, laughed at, jested with, and insulted; and then, with scarcely an exception, dismissed with the technical "The prisoner may be set at liberty." He had ample opportunity of witnessing the various effects which terror produced on the minds of the parties under examination. The flippancy and affected nonchalance of some; the high resolve and unflinching demeanour of others; in some few instances, the irrepressible agony of an expected and bloody death. He had also time to allow his thoughts to gather from that scene the possible fate of Marie before one of the no less terrible revolutionary tribunals of Paris. It could not be, but that in some of the cases brought before him, he should feel for the moment a deep interest; but still none of the prisoners were known to him, either by sight or name, till Father Laval stood before the tribunal. He caught the priest's eye, the inquiring expression of which seemed to demand in what capacity he was detained there; but to put or to answer a question, was, of course, a thing impossible.

"A priest," said Carrier, "I see;" as the father stood before him. "That sort of thing is pretty well over. You are the first of that kind of cattle which has turned in here to-day. Taken the oath to the Constitution, I suppose?"

"I have not," replied Father Laval.

"Have not; how's that?" asked Carrier.

"My conscience prevented my doing it," answered the priest.

"Oho, did it!" cried the president. "I think, citoyens, that the prisoner may be set at liberty." And without further remark, Father Laval was hurried from the room.

Already had several prisoners, either from the Catholic army, or from that under M. de la Charrette, been set aside with Duchenier, and the course of half an hour more increased the number to fourteen or fifteen. At one o'clock, Carrier observed that he had got through so much business as positively to feel an appetite; and that he believed his friends would find luncheon ready in an adjoining apartment. "But we may as well send these fellows off first," he said, pointing to Duchenier.

"By all means," answered Pelletier. "Levrier, get Tarne to look after them."

Accordingly, as soon as the commissioners had retired, Tarne was summoned and appeared.

"Tarne," said Levrier, "our friends here are going on the water; just have the kindness to pay the boatman:" and with a nod of intelligence the turnkey left the room for a moment, and returned with three or four of his brethren. The prisoners were chained together two and two; and thus made seven couples. Ten of them were men, the rest women; and none of them, excepting Duchenier himself, appeared to have any clear idea of the fate that awaited them, as they had been taken in the more distant parts of the country, and had not remained long enough in Nantes to become acquainted with the system adopted there by the republicans. Thus, amidst the jeers of the mob, and through the narrow streets of Nantes, they were conducted on their last journey to the water's edge.

CHAPTER XIV.

Now we return to Paris. We left Marie Duchenier ignorant of the method by which her liberty had been attained, and consequently of her father's fate; and pursuing her way, in the same hackney-coach which he had employed to carry him to the Saint Lazare, to the lodgings which he had occupied since his arrival in Paris.

After a tedious quarter of an hour, the driver stopped before the third-rate inn which De Beaurepaire had selected; and on inquiring for M. de Brissac's rooms—for her father had acquainted her with his change of name—she was shewn into a better apartment than the look of the house might have warranted her expecting. On inquiring for his servant, the waiter soon called Texier, whose whole behaviour—a strange compound of joy at his young lady's liberty and of anguish at the price by which it had been purchased—was, for the moment, a perfect riddle to Marie. At length he gave her a letter, with which M. de Beaurepaire, he said, had entrusted him; and Marie wondered that her father, who intended to rejoin her in a few hours, should be at the pains of leaving a letter to meet her arrival. But she wondered still more at the great agitation evinced by Texier; who, after saying that he would return in a quarter of an hour to know Madame's pleasure, rushed from rather than left the room.

He did return as he said, not knowing in what state he should find Madame Duchenier. She was standing by the window, with the letter, again folded, in her hands; and on the entrance of the peasant, she spoke to him in a tone rather low, but so firm that Texier could hardly credit his ears.

"Texier," she said, "my father in thus saving my life will have made me guilty of his blood, unless I can either in

my turn save him, or else return to the Saint Lazare and share his fate, whatever it may be. Now, tell me all you know of the matter, that I may judge how to act."

Texier took courage, and gave a tolerably correct account of the steps which De Beaurepaire had taken; and once or twice, where he was not quite clear, or not well informed, Marie questioned him again. When he had done, she merely said, "Leave me now, Texier, but be within call; for I shall want you again presently."

As soon as she was left alone, Marie endeavoured to recall every scheme, however wild or impracticable, which she had heard of as proposed, or practised, by prisoners in the Revolution. But her complete ignorance of Paris, her want of acquaintance with every single soul in it, and her destitution of any means of securing an assistant on whose fidelity she might rely, caused her to abandon them, one after another, as impracticable and visionary. At length she remembered Monsieur de Cailly's observation when she had been taken from his charge at Mirebeau; and she recollected also to have heard from other quarters, that while a petitioner might, with greater hope of success, apply to a lion or a tiger than to Robespierre or Marat, there were moments when Danton might be approached with some degree of safety, and even hope. At all events, it was her only chance; if her father could be saved at all by her means, it would only be by a personal appeal to that terrible man. The more she thought of this plan, the more feasible it seemed to her: besides his other qualities, Danton was far more avaricious than either Robespierre, who gloried in the epithet of the Incorruptible, or Marat, who cared for nothing but blood; he was a villain, it is true, but a villain who had his lights as well as his shades; while the other two seemed utterly destitute of every sentiment which might be supposed to retain some possession even of the worst and most hardened hearts. To Danton, then, she determined to apply; and the only thing to be done was, to obtain information as to his residence; for it might be essential to her purpose to see him alone.

At the end of about half an hour, Marie again summoned Texier. "I have made up my mind," she said, "what to

do; but I have no right to ask you to share my dangers; and I think it would on all accounts be better that you should return at once to the Catholic army. I will give you a letter to M. de la Rochejacquelein, explaining to him what I mean to do; and then ——"

But Texier would listen no longer. "There is not, madame," he said, "man, woman, or child, in La Vendée, but would cry shame upon me if I were to leave you now. Only tell me, madame, what you mean to do, and what it is you wish me to do, and see if I will not do it to the best of my power. The times look dark enough, heaven knows; but they can't look worse than they did when I followed M. de Beaurepaire into La Flêche, and yet we succeeded there; and so, with GOD'S help, we may now." Having concluded this speech, one of the longest he ever made in his life, Texier waited resolutely for his young mistress's answer; and when she told him, that if he were willing to expose himself for her and her father's sake, she should only be too thankful to have so zealous and so faithful a servant, he seemed to consider himself as quite repaid for his offer. Marie Duchenier then proceeded to explain to him her own plans; and informed him that that very afternoon she had determined, if possible, to see Danton; all, therefore, that he had to do was, to discover the private residence of that personage, and to accompany her to it. Texier readily undertook to do the former; and in about half an hour he returned with the information that M. Danton resided at No. 2 Rue de la Paix. "And I find," said he, "that it is usually thought better to see him towards evening; they say then one has a better chance of making him attend."

"Engage a carriage, then," said Marie, "to be here at five o'clock; and till that time I shall not want you. What sort of man is the landlord of this inn?"

"Well, madame," answered Texier, "I can't make much out of him; for people are so cautious now-a-days that they will not say two words before a stranger; but he seems to me an honest sort of fellow enough, if he had his own way."

"Well," said Marie, "I may as well see if I can get any

thing from him. Ask him to do me the favour to step up into this room."

The landlord accordingly came. He was much such an one by nature as his brethren of the present day in the second or third rate inns of large cities in France; that is to say, he was tall, thin, and scraggy, with a neck projecting like a crane's, and eyes continually peering about, as if to make sure that none of his customers should abstract any thing belonging to him. However, take him for all in all, M. Dommette was not a bad man; he was at heart a favourer of the Bourbons, the rather because during the times of the Revolution he had found his coffee-room much deserted; but sooner than allow to his most intimate friend, that he would have no objection to wear the white cockade, he would have subjected himself to what to him would have been the worst of privations, continual silence.

"I sent for you, monsieur," said Marie, "to inquire whether my father, M. de Brissac, has left any account in your establishment unsettled? because, if so, as I am myself going out this afternoon, and do not know whether I shall return to-night, I thought that it might be convenient to settle it."

"Madame is very obliging," said the landlord; "but M. de Brissac was so kind as to arrange every thing before he went out this morning. Does he not return, then, madame? Ay, he is a perfect gentleman: only I thought he seemed to have somewhat that weighed on his mind. The best of us have, you know, madame; and I am sure in these days, when one may have friends on both sides, one is sure to have something to be anxious about for some one or other."

"You say very true," replied Marie. "My father had a good deal to make him anxious; and I have to the full as much as he."

"Madame in trouble?" inquired the landlord; and he hesitated for a moment, his good nature contending with his caution. But at last the former seemed to prevail; for M. Dommette shrewdly suspected that both the gentleman whom he had had the honour of entertaining and his daughter were, if not aristocrats themselves, at all events implicated

in the royalist troubles. "If," he therefore continued, "madame could point out any way in which I could be of service to her, consistently of course with the duty of a good citizen, I should only be too glad."

"Certainly," answered Marie, "I need advice from some one who knows Paris; for my servant, as I dare say you have found out, is fresh from the country."

"Ah," replied Dommette, "*c'est un garçon bien honnête, mais tant soit peu imprudent.* I am sure, madame, he has talked more politics in half an hour than I should venture to talk in half a year. I thought too," he continued, speaking lower, and coming rather closer to Marie,—"I might have been mistaken, but I did think that he spoke in the west-country patois." There could, by the by, be no manner of doubt on the subject, for Texier's dialect was of the broadest possible Poitevin.

"Well," said Marie, smiling, and looking steadily at the landlord, "if it be so, you know west-country folks are likely enough to be in trouble just now."

"Just so," replied Dommette, growing more and more certain that his first conjecture was right; "well, politics never made any difference with me, so long, you know, madame, as I did my duty as a citizen ——"

"Of course," interrupted Marie.

"And therefore, supposing that you are here a stranger in Paris, and in any trouble about royalist friends, I will advise you to the best of my power; more help than advice I dare not give. There are not many things, madame, that I am afraid of, but there is one, and that is, *incivisme.*"

"I believe," returned Madame Duchenier, "you already pretty well guess all that I could tell you. I do not think you will betray me; and if you do, I am already in your power. The fact is, that my father, M. de Brissac, has been arrested on suspicion of loyalism; I am here, as you see, alone, willing to do any thing and to suffer any thing, by which I might save him. And you will, perhaps, pity me the more," she continued, her eyes in spite of herself filling with tears as she spoke, "when I tell you, that I have a hus-

band in prison for the same cause, whom it is even yet more out of my power to assist."

The landlord was fairly surprised out of his prudence; and after blowing his nose, and flourishing before him a particularly dirty silk-handkerchief, he said, "Madame, I beg you to believe me, that on my honour," and he laid his hand on his heart, "I will do any thing that you can reasonably expect to help you. M. votre mari, is he confined in Paris?"

"Oh, no!" answered Marie, "would that he were! but they carried him to Nantes;" for she had learnt this from De Beaurepaire himself, who had acquired the information when passing through Cerisay on his road to Paris.

"In prison at Nantes!" cried the landlord; "why, there is a man down stairs, and a merry sort of fellow he is too, who was in prison there himself a few days ago, and on the same charge. He made no secret about it at all, and rather seemed to be amused at what he had gone through; though, poor fellow, by his own account, he ran a very narrow chance of his life. Would madame like to see him?"

"If there were any likelihood," said Marie, "that he could know any thing; but I fear it is impossible. And yet ——"

"May I ask monsieur's name?" said Dommette.

"Duchenier," replied his wife, who had not the least idea of the interest taken by the Parisians in the revolt of La Vendée, and the minuteness of their information with respect to it.

"Duchenier!" cried the landlord in horror. "What, the famous Duchenier in La Vendée! Whew! who would ever have thought it? Well, madame, this is rather serious."

"I might have thought it," said poor Marie. "I might have known that it was impossible to hope for a friend here. You will let me, however, speak to this man myself."

"Come, come," said Dommette; "there are two sides to every question. To be sure it is a grave matter to have to do with a man so well known as M. Duchenier, and is like to be paid in *monnoie du singe*. But then, again, there is no fear of your betraying me."

"Of my betraying you?" asked Marie in surprise.

"Ah!" said the landlord, "you may think it strange that

I should say so ; but stranger things than that happen every day of the year now. However, as I say, if I am in your power, you are in mine, that is one comfort; and so I will even go and speak to the young man I told you of."

He went accordingly ; and as the person of whom he spoke happened to be none other than our old acquaintance Dreux, he speedily found that the worthy actor was able to give a good deal of information as to the fate of Charles Duchenier; not, it may be supposed, that the account could give any comfort to the mind of his wife. For Dreux knew nothing that had happened after his own acquittal by the commission; and indeed, he had made all possible haste to take his departure from Nantes. After talking with this man, Marie's determination was but the more firmly fixed to petition Danton herself for her father's deliverance; and the actor having been dismissed, she proceeded to acquaint Dommette with her resolution. The worthy landlord, on being informed of it, felt and expressed the greatest possible terror.

"There was nothing," he said, "to be hoped for from such an interview; and the danger was so great as to make it almost certain destruction. The probable consequence would be, that Madame Duchenier, far from being able to procure her father's release, would herself be committed to prison, and then all the care and anxiety of Monsieur de Brissac, and his own sacrifice, would be in vain."

However, Marie was not to be diverted from her purpose; and having been acquainted by the landlord that she had been correctly informed as to the place of Danton's residence, she repeated her orders that the hackney-coach should be waiting for her by five o'clock, and then requested to be left alone. With this request the landlord complied; but as he really entertained a very great degree of pity for his guest, and could think of no better means of displaying his sympathy than providing her with a good dinner, which, arguing from his own feelings, he judged would be acceptable under any circumstances, he requested Madame Dommette, to whom he had entrusted the secret that a royalist lady was staying in the house, to provide such a repast as should do credit to her kitchen and to her cook. The good landlady

very willingly consented; though, much to her disappointment, some two hours after, the dishes came down very nearly untasted. Five o'clock at length came; the hackney-coach made its appearance, and Texier, mounting the box, gave the coachman his orders. In the half hour which that melancholy journey consumed, Marie Duchenier had ample time to reflect on the miserably small hopes of success which she could reasonably entertain.

Nevertheless, though such an application must at all times have been one of great peril, the present moment was that in which there was perhaps less than at any other period. The party with which Danton acted was completely triumphant; the royalists had long ago been crushed, and now the Girondists also lay prostrate, and Danton shared the supreme power of France with only two rivals. One of these, namely Marat, he thoroughly despised. Nor could he then discern that the moderate talents of Robespierre would ultimately prove his own downfal. So that, what with his reflections on the power to which he had raised himself, his hopes for the future, and his present enjoyment of the series of banquets by which the city of Paris testified their gratitude to him and to his companions, Danton was now in an extremely placid state of mind.

It was nearly six o'clock when the hackney-coach drew up at his door. The house was one of some pretensions; the door stood open, and ten or a dozen persons were waiting in the hall, on various matters of business. On receiving information that Danton was within, Marie Duchenier followed the servant into the house, and desired Texier to await her return by the coach.

The servant, on announcing to his master that a lady wished to speak to him, added, with the familiarity which Danton always encouraged, "Quite an aristocratical figure, monsieur; I have not seen such an one here this many a day."

"Indeed!" said Danton; "pretty?"

"Monsieur must judge for himself."

"Young?"

"Yes, monsieur, so far as I could see through her veil."

"Tell her to step up, then; and just set a chair on the other side of the table." And in a few moments Marie Duchenier was ushered into the room.

She thought that she had prepared her mind for its brutal appearance, so remarkable a contrast to the apartments of Robespierre; but the reality far surpassed her imaginations.

Danton had been dining, and was even then loitering over his Burgundy; the table and the sideboard were crowded with a strange mixture of dirty plates, greasy documents connected with the business of the Convention, fragments of the last, or rather, it should seem, of the two or three last meals, a hair-brush, and other articles of a similar kind. The furniture looked as if it were never dusted, and the floor as if it were never washed; the room smelt strongly of cigars and spirits; and the walls were adorned with only one plate, the execution of Louis XVI. But the personal appearance of Danton was quite in keeping with his room. His enormous body, still more enormous head, his uncombed and matted hair, the large teeth which he shewed in speaking, his ill-made clothes, and general ruffian-like appearance, made him seem, at least so it appeared to the frightened eyes of Marie, the very image of a giant in his den. On entering the apartment she trembled so much as to excite the notice of the republican.

"Why, madame," he said, in his loud, harsh voice, "you seem frightened at something. What's the matter? Let me hear if I can give you a helping hand."

Had Marie been as well acquainted with Danton as those who associated with him, she would have known that this speech was for him an extreme proof of affability and condescension: as she was not, it did not very much tend to restore her composure. However, she sank down into the chair to which Danton had motioned her, for he did not think of giving himself the trouble to rise when she entered the room.

"I may well be frightened, monsieur," she began, "for I am in very great trouble." And her terror and agitation stopped her voice.

"Trouble!" said Danton. "Hang it, so is half France; but what's that to me?"

"Only I thought, monsieur—I thought that perhaps if I stated the cause to you, you might be able to do something for me." It was with great difficulty that she was able to say so much.

"Able enough, I dare say," replied the other, with a noise which he intended for a laugh, but which sounded far more like a howl; "but the question is, whether I shall choose." And as he spoke, he poured himself out another glass of wine, and drank it off.

Marie ventured to throw back her veil, and for one moment to look at the democrat; and that glance pleaded her cause far more effectually than any words which she could have used.

"My father," she said, "is now a prisoner in the S. Lazare as an aristocrat; and I know not to whom to apply but to yourself, with any hope for procuring either his liberation, or else at least a favourable hearing. I ought to say," she continued, almost fearing that she was insulting Danton, —as if a nature like his had been susceptible of such an insult,—"I ought to say, that my father has a considerable sum of money in Poitou, now in the care of some friends at present with the Vendean army; and they, I am sure, would gladly contribute any thing in reason which might be required to procure his enlargement."

Danton said nothing for about a minute, but sat gazing on Marie Duchenier in a manner which might at another time have terrified her, but which now she was too much engrossed by her errand to notice; but at last he said, in a careless manner, "What is your father's name?"

"De Beaurepaire," she answered.

"And yours—De Beaurepaire too?"

"No, monsieur, I am married. My name is Duchenier."

"What, the wife of that Duchenier down in La Vendée?" demanded Danton, angrily.

"The same, monsieur," answered Marie, gaining courage from feeling that her position could not be worse than it was.

Danton made a long pause: it might have lasted two minutes, but it seemed interminable. He drank another

glass of wine; and this time offered one to his visitor, which she declined.

"Where is your husband?" he asked.

"If he is living, monsieur," she answered in a low voice, "he is at Nantes."

"At Nantes, is he?" asked Danton. "How came he there?"

"He was taken prisoner in Poitou, and they carried him there at once."

"Well," said Danton, looking at Marie so earnestly that she could not help shrinking from him as from some evil being, "so you want your father to be set at liberty?"

"If I only dared to hope it," she answered.

"And what would you say if I gave orders for your husband's liberation?—that is to say, if they have not chopped his head off already, or rather, as I believe old Carrier does not deal in that sort of thing, drowned him in the Loire."

"O monsieur!" was all that Marie could say, as she hid her face in her hands and burst into tears, almost equally agitated by the hope of which he had given her the glimpse, and the dreadful images which his brutal speech had called up.

"Well, child, well, you must remember," said he, "that nothing in this world can be done for nothing; that money of which you spoke must be forthcoming. What sum does it amount to?"

"My father left in Poitou twenty thousand francs; but I am sure that his friends would endeavour to raise double that sum."

"Very well," said Danton, "then there are three things that you must remember. The first is, that those francs must be forthcoming at once; the second, that you say not a word to any one of your having been here with me; and the third, that you keep in the way if I happen to send for you. Do you understand?"

Marie promised obedience to all that he required. "I had better," she said, "continue where I am now staying."

"Where is that?"

She mentioned the place; and Danton, after considering

a moment, said, "That will do very well. I give you my word, that as soon as the money is paid in, your father shall be set free; and stop a moment and listen to what I am going to say. I will write to-night to Nantes, and desire Carrier to suspend your husband's execution; and on the fulfilment of certain conditions which I will name to you hereafter, he also shall be set at liberty; or if his case is too flagrant for that, the gaoler shall forget to lock his cell. Now what do you say to me for that?"

Marie expressed her thanks again and again, as well as her tears would let her, and then rose to take her leave. To her equal horror and disgust the ruffian threw his arm round her, and kissed her. She had, however, presence of mind enough to suppress her feelings until Danton loosed his hold. She was about halfway down the stairs when she heard the same terrible voice calling her back again; and slowly and reluctantly she obeyed.

"One word more," he said; "you are not, on any account, to communicate with your father till you hear from me again. Now you may go."

CHAPTER XV.

It was a dark and stormy night. In a small cottage about three miles to the south of Nantes, the leaders of the Vendean army, much as we have already introduced them to the reader, were seated round a miserable table, which seemed to have been patched up for the occasion. There were papers, pens, and ink, upon it; several plans of fortifications, and estimates of the strength of various divisions of the army. A small fire was burning on the hearth; for though it was now the end of June, the night was cold and raw. We said that the leaders of the insurgent army occupied much the same positions as when we last saw them: there were, however, a few slight changes.

Cathelineau, who had fully supported the character which he brought to the insurrection, had been, by the unanimous consent of the leaders, elevated to the post of general-in-chief. It was an admirable arrangement, not only because the Saint of Anjou was so much beloved, but also because, in a rebellion which was supposed to be undertaken in support of the interest of the aristocracy, no leader could be more likely to shew the absurdity of that belief than a peasant like Cathelineau. He therefore occupied the head of the table on the present occasion, and opposite to him sat the so-called Bishop of Agra, a tall, grey, stern personage, who became his ecclesiastical robes very well, and from whose demeanour none would have suspected the deceit which he was practising on the Catholic army, and by which he was eventually to disgrace it.

The party then was, as we have said, thus assembled; and the question in debate was the immediate attack which it was proposed to make on the city of Nantes. The success which had attended the operations of the Catholic army hitherto

had given rise to the idea that, by a skilful co-operation on the part of M. de la Charrette, who commanded the insurgents on the north of the Loire, it might be possible, by seizing the city, to obtain possession of the river, and thus to command a communication with England. It was well known that there was a strong disposition in the British ministry to send a body of troops to the relief of the royalists; and it was thought that the possession of one important place would determine Mr. Pitt no longer to delay what he had already half-promised to do.

"We are resolved, then," said Cathelineau, "to attack the city on all sides at once, and in the same way as we have already hitherto done. For myself, I know nothing of a regular siege; so that, if our operations are to be carried on according to rule, I must, for this one night at least, resign my command."

"Oh," said De la Rochejacquelein, "for the matter of that, I do not think that any one of us has more knowledge than yourself, except indeed M. de Marigny and M. d'Elbée. We must each do our best; and we shall succeed as we have succeeded before."

"That is the way," said D'Elbée; "to try to go by line and rule would only puzzle the more, I am sure, our ignorance. Besides, after all, we lose nothing by it. If you give a sword to two men, one of them a perfect master of fencing, and the other a man who knows nothing about it, their chance is pretty nearly equal."

"So I have heard," said De Lescure. "According to that, we lose nothing by our plan for to-night. But you are acquainted, M. de Marigny, with the general features of the town?"

"Oh, yes!" said Marigny, "I have them all by heart. And I will answer to make our cannon do their part. I should recommend, M. Cathelineau, that we form in three divisions. The one of them should attack the gate which they call the river gate; the second a detached redoubt, which, so far as I can learn, is just opposite to the Porte Saint Jean; and the third may try to cross the ditch at a place my lieutenant will shew them, about half-way between the two great

churches; I don't know their names. That, with your favour, M. Cathelineau, I should propose to make the real attack; the other two I intend for feints; though if it should happen that we carry the redoubt I spoke of, so much the better for us."

"How many did we muster last night?" asked Lescure.

"About fourteen thousand four hundred," returned Cathelineau; "but I can't say that they are in such good spirits as I have seen them. They cannot understand what advantage it would be to them, if we succeed; and they are always more at home, you know, in the open field than in a town."

"I think," said D'Elbée, "that the other division must muster something like twenty thousand men. What time had you any intelligence from them?"

"I had a note," said Lescure, "from Charrette, dated seven o'clock this evening; in which he finally arranged every thing, and fixed two o'clock for the general attack. But he very much urged that we should leave one gate and one road entirely open; and he named that to Vannes."

"Why?" asked De la Rochejacquelein.

"Why," returned Lescure, "we have never before put the republicans in a position where they must conquer or die; and he thinks, and I think too, that it will be much better to leave the means of escape open to them."

"So I think," said D'Elbée. "Will there not be time to communicate once more with Charrette? A single mistake will ruin the whole enterprise."

"Certainly there will," replied Lescure. "Shall I write a few lines to him?"

"We shall be much obliged to you," said D'Elbée. And accordingly De Lescure drew his chair nearer to the table, and began to write.

"You are to give the signal, remember, M. de Marigny," said the president. "What is it to be?"

"Two rockets," said Marigny; "one about a quarter of a minute after the other. I have taken care there shall be no mistake, for mine will burn blue. So if they send up any in the town to distract you, you will know what it is."

"The only question, then," said Cathelineau, "is to settle who shall lead each division. If the council think well, I shall be very happy to attack the redoubt."

"And I," said D'Elbée, "should like to be at the river gate."

"And I presume," returned the president, "that M. de Lescure will have no objection to command the other detachment?"

"With pleasure," said Lescure, looking off for a moment from his paper. "Has any one any sealing-wax?"

But as the house did not furnish any, De Lescure was compelled to be contented with folding down a corner of the note.

"Now," said he, "whom shall we trust with this? I think it would be almost better if one of us were to go. We should be able to judge for ourselves of Charrette's force, and could answer any questions he has to ask."

"I will go," said De la Rochejacquelein, starting up; "I should like the ride of all things."

"I am sure we shall be very much obliged to you," said Cathelineau.

"I will order my horse round directly, then," cried the other; and he was moving to the door for that purpose, when the sound of a horse galloping up made him pause.

"Why, who can that be?" said D'Elbée. "Charrette is beforehand with us, I expect; and he is sending to us, instead of we to him."

The horse was reined-up at the door; there was the sound of some one dismounting; a quick step was heard in the little passage which led to the inn parlour; the door was opened; and to the intense astonishment of every member of the council, Duchenier presented himself.

"Duchenier!" cried Lescure, starting up, and grasping him by the hand. "Why, I can hardly believe my eyes. We thought that you had fallen long ago into the hands of these republican tigers, and we intended to have revenged you this very night. It is almost too good to be true."

"I don't know that, M. de Lescure," said Duchenier, in a deep and melancholy voice; "I have lost every thing that

it was worth living for, except our cause and our honour; and I should like to strike one blow for that before I follow those who have gone before me."

"Step this way, Charles," said De Lescure, kindly; "this meeting is almost too much for you; you shall come and tell me more about yourself. You will excuse us a moment, gentlemen?"

"Let me first say," said Duchenier, "that if you knew all the atrocities now carrying on in that miserable town, I think it would give you more than human strength to assault it."

"Well," said Lescure, who was afraid that Duchenier's mind might be suffering from the excitement and grief he had undergone, "you shall come and tell me all about it. If any thing of importance happens, you will have the kindness, gentlemen, to let us know." And he led Duchenier into a little room on the opposite side of the passage.

"You look faint, Charles," he said. "I shall insist on your taking something before I hear any thing from you. Pierre," he cried, going to the door, "tell them to send us in what there is in the house; never mind what it is."

"Let me ask one thing," said Duchenier, "and then I will try to do as you wish. Have you heard any thing of"—his voice faltered a good deal—"of my poor wife?"

"Thus much," replied his friend, "and only thus much. She is or was in the prison of the Saint Lazare, with every thing around her as comfortable as could possibly be expected, and a kind-hearted gaoler. When her father wrote to me, which is now three weeks ago or more, he expressed himself very confidently as to being able to procure her liberation, but he did not say how. But surely you must know all this?"

"Not a word of it," replied Duchenier. "Oh, what a load you have taken off my mind! If she is only alive, one seems to be able to hope any thing."

"To be sure you may," said De Lescure. "Here comes supper. You must really take some."

"I never expected," said Duchenier, seating himself at the table, "to have joined the army again. You know not

on what a thread my life also has hung." And he proceeded to give his friend an account of what had happened to him till the time of his trial by the commission of Nantes.

"That was now three weeks ago," he said; "and after we had actually been ordered off the river, they preferred keeping us back till they should have some other prisoners from Charrette's army. Yesterday afternoon the gaoler came down to us, and told us that we were wanted. In the court of the prison there were as many as sixty men, women, and children, all condemned by the commission. Our arms were tied behind us, and we were led down to the side of the river. There we saw the vessel on board of which we were to go; an old weather-beaten thing, lying close to the side of the dock. You had to cross a plank to get on board; and such a scene as that crossing I never before beheld. Many had to be goaded on with bayonets; one or two jumped into the water of their own accord, and were drowned at once; and every time that any great resistance was made, the crowd on both sides of the dock yelled and shrieked with pleasure. At last we were all forced in; they cut the rope that held the vessel, towed her out, and she drifted down the river. It was a most heart-rending sight to see the vain attempts that the prisoners made to give themselves a chance. They untied each other's arms, they wrenched up such small planks as they could contrive to move; one or two mothers attempted to fasten their children to these, or to a loose spar; the men took off their coats; and all this while the water was pouring in rapidly, and the vessel going down by inches. But whether it did not sink so rapidly as they expected, or whether they were afraid that we should drift out of their sight, I know not; just as we were passing Porte S. Louis, they fired into us twice; and at the second shot, the crazy old vessel seemed to double up on that side, and amidst the shrieks of the prisoners, went down like a stone. I hardly know what happened next; but I determined, though it seemed hardly possible to reach the shore, or to escape being murdered if one did reach it, to make one long effort for my life. The current carried me down a good mile and a half before I could struggle on to the beach; and there I

lay under the shelter of a bed of osiers till it seemed dark enough to move with safety. Fortunately I had not walked half a mile, hardly knowing where I was going, before I fell in with one of your patrols; he led me to the advanced guard; the sergeant lent me his horse; and here I am."

He had hardly finished when there was a knock at the door, and D'Elbée entered. "I congratulate you, M. Duchenier, on your return to us. The council are just going to break up. Will you take any part in the attack to-night?"

"Most certainly," said Duchenier. "How can I be of service to you?"

"Will you act under M. de Lescure?" asked D'Elbée.

"I cannot wish any thing better," replied Duchenier.

"Very well," said D'Elbée; "so be it then. Let us go back into the room where the council are sitting."

They did so, and a few final arrangements were made. It was agreed Lescure should remain at the inn till the return of De la Rochejacquelein, and that the other leaders should at once repair to their several posts. In five minutes the little inn was comparatively deserted; Lescure and Duchenier sat by the side of the fire, and passed the time in giving and receiving explanations of the plan of the attack; and at last both sank into silence. About a quarter before one o'clock the quick gallop of a horse was heard from the north, and in a few moments De la Rochejacquelein hurried into the room.

"It is all right, De Lescure. It is right," he said. "I left them under march. Charrette seemed in high spirits, and comprehended the whole plan perfectly. Now, are you ready?"

Going out of the house, the three friends found their horses waiting for them, and their immediate followers, in number about ten men, prepared to mount. The night was close and dark; a low fog hung over the meadows; and to the north, the course of the Loire was marked by a kind of serpent-like cloud following the bendings of the stream. The party rode forward at a round trot.

"We could not have a better night," said Lescure. "We

must cross the river at the northern bridge; for we have no time to lose."

As they advanced, the occasional movement of a large body of men came clearer and clearer; and as they approached the bridge he had named, which had now been for some days in the hands of the insurgents, the sharp eye of De Lescure distinguished a dark body of men moving through the meadows to his left, and to the north of the river.

"That is D'Elbée's detachment," he said to Duchenier; "we have none of us too much time to spare." And they pressed forward still more rapidly. Another quarter of an hour brought them up to their own party, who had encamped at a mile's distance from the city. Every thing was prepared for motion; and after a few moments' conference with his lieutenant, De Lescure gave the word, "Quick march."

Arrived at the top of a slight elevation, which partly overlooked the town, they found that Marigny had posted his artillery to the best possible advantage. He was standing, in company with a few of his men, and giving orders for the better lodgment of one of the pieces.

"You are in very good time, gentlemen," he exclaimed; "it wants a full quarter of an hour. Did you see any thing of the other detachments?"

"I thought," replied Lescure, "that I could make out D'Elbée's; but I will not be certain. However, if it were not they, he must have been at his post before they came by."

"Are the rockets ready, De Lorme?" asked Marigny. "Just drive a stake in here."

The man addressed went for them; the stake was driven in; and the party stood by for a few moments in silence.

"I cannot do much for you," said Marigny, "at present; but if you can once get over the glacis, I will answer to silence the fire from the rampart itself. If you can get into the covered way, lose not a moment in turning their own pieces against the town."

"We will do our best to do so," said Duchenier. "Is there any thing else to be said?"

"I think not," replied Marigny. "I am afraid you will

find them too well prepared. But I think we shall distract them by attacking them on so many points."

"It only wants two minutes," said the man called De Lorme.

"We will give them five more," returned Marigny; "for it is always better to be too late than too early."

As he spoke, the great bell of the nearest church struck two; and a moment after, they heard the sentinels on the wall passing the word, "All's right."

"I don't think," said Marigny, "that the troops can be under arms in the town; at least, I don't believe that the guards are doubled. Yet if they have got no notice of our design, our secret must have been very well kept."

"Is it not time?" inquired De la Rochejacquelein.

"I think, gentlemen," replied Marigny, "that you had better put yourselves at the head of your troops. They know what they have to do."

The three officers went forward and took their places. A lighted candle was brought; there was a moment of suspense; then came the rushing sound of a rocket; and leaving a blue tail behind it, it burst high up in the air, scattering its little stars on all sides. Almost before it was extinguished, the quick sharp rattle of a drum beating to arms was heard in the city: De Lescure had some difficulty to restrain his men; in a few seconds more the other rocket rose and burst; and then raising his voice to its utmost pitch, he gave the word, "Forward."

The men were at the top of the glacis almost before they were aware that the attack had commenced; the sentinels were driven in; two of the pieces were taken; and in five minutes, with scarcely a wound, the whole of De Lescure's division were in the possession of the covered way. It fortunately happened that it was now low tide; and the water in the ditch, which, from the imperfect state of the fortifications, depended on that of the river, and followed its ebb and flow, was very low.

Still enough was left considerably to embarrass the royalist troops; and the uncertain light enabled their leaders to see that the wall itself was very strongly fortified. At the

very moment that they were encouraging their men to descend the counterscarp, ten long tongues of light shot forth from the bastions, right and left of them, and from the tenailles, which, according to the old system of fortification, were in the line of defence; while a sharp fire of musketry poured in upon the assailants from the top of the curtain.

"Into the water, into the water!" cried Lescure. And a considerable body of his men followed the example which he set, and dashed into it. At the same moment Marigny, now fully guided by the fire of the besieged, brought his guns to bear on the bastions and on the curtain, quickly dispersing the troops who occupied the latter. It was found impossible to depress the cannon so as to bear on the Vendeans in the ditch; and thus for a moment they remained in comparative safety, exposed only to the occasional discharge of small arms. The scaling-ladders, such as they were, were brought forward; but, partly owing to the unusual height of the rampart, and partly to the quantity of mud deposited in the ditch, they were found to come four feet short of the top of the wall.

"We must send for others," cried Lescure. "Duchenier, will you ride for them?"

"Where?" inquired Duchenier.

"Marigny will tell you," answered his friend. And Duchenier, assisted by some of his men at the counterscarp, hurried forward to that officer.

In the mean time De la Rochejacquelein had called for pickaxes, and was endeavouring to loosen some stones in the *revêtement*, and to ascend by a desperate effort that way.

Duchenier made the best of his way to Marigny; but before he could reach that officer, the sound of a heavy cannonade to the south-west convinced him that some failure in the plan had taken place in that quarter. Not without considerable danger did he reach the summit of the little hillock we have mentioned.

"Monsieur de Marigny," he said, panting with his exertion, "the scaling-ladders are too short. Where am I to go for others?"

"I fear," said Marigny, hardly seeming to notice his

question, "that it will be all over with us. Canclaux must have thrown a very strong body into La Nort. That firing can be nothing else."

"But where am I to go?" persisted Duchenier. "De Lescure told me to come to you."

"D'Elbée's men have some," returned Marigny; "but I doubt whether they are longer than yours; for that redoubt is not very high. Cathelineau was to take the best."

"How am I to get to him?" said Duchenier.

"Depress that piece," said Marigny to one of the gunners. "Don't you see that you are quite over the rampart? That is better.—Why, if you want to save time, ride on between La Nort and the city: but better take another man with you in case of the worst; you will find it hot work there."

"Come you with me then, De Lorme," said Duchenier; "I know you can ride well. Bring me my horse." And in another moment the two were galloping together towards the bridge. Crossing that, and ascending the high ground beyond the river, the whole magnificent scene of a night-attack burst upon them at once. All round the city, at intervals of a minute or a minute and a half, every embrasure seemed to shoot forth a stream of living light; in the flashes of radiance you might catch the spires and towers of the city, the old townhall, the whole circuit of the walls, the castle, and even the masts of the vessels at anchor in the river. Then, before darkness closed in again, a kind of luminous smoke rolled up from the ramparts, broken only by the incessant flashing of small arms, that looked in the distance like the radiance of so many glow-worms. In the mean time, in the intervals when the roar of the batteries was silent, the rattle of the drums might be heard in the market-place; and occasionally the note of a trumpet came across the city from Charrette's body. Still they pressed forward; and on reaching the brow of the hill, saw the full danger to which the Vendean army was exposed. It was as Marigny had imagined. The little suburb of La Nort had been strongly fortified by Canclaux; and the most desperate efforts of D'Elbée were unable to bring up his men to the redoubt which had been appointed as his place of attack. But further

off, and close in to the city, the light of the batteries clearly shewed that Cathelineau was advancing on the river-gate; though he, too, Duchenier thought, had been behind his time.

"Now, De Lorme," said Duchenier, "if I fall, what you have to do is this; ride to M. Cathelineau, tell him that our scaling-ladders are full four feet too short; let him know that we have made a lodgment on the covered way, and are sure of being able to get in, if he can send the ladders at once. Any how, they can hold the wall on this side the ditch, till reinforcements come."

Saying this, Duchenier galloped on through the meadows which lay between La Nort and the river. Very beautiful would they have been on that summer night at any other time, and on any other errand; the buttercups, and cowslips, and ox-eyes, with which they were covered; the sweet damp smell of the dewy hedges; the shrill scream of the startled blackbird, as the horses passed his bush; and here and there the orchards now beginning to give rich promise of autumn. The way was easy to find; for the fields were divided by innumerable paths and lanes; and through these, as best they might, the adventurers made their way, till they reached the southernmost bridge. By the time they had gained that, day was breaking very fast in the east; the grey clouds had a strong clear silver line under them; and the morning breeze was beginning to rise. The bridge was held by a strong party of Angevins.

"Who goes there?" cried the sentinel, thrown out fifty yards from the southern side of the river; at the same time presenting his piece.

"Courvoisier," said Duchenier, who knew the man, "do you know what is the meaning of all that firing behind us?"

"O monsieur, is it you?" cried the soldier; "we had given you up for lost. No; none of us can tell. There must be some dreadful mistake. We dare not send one man to see, in case of a sally from the garrison."

"Never mind! never mind!" said Duchenier; "M. De Lescure's men are all but in the town. Be on your guard: they must not cross here." And again he and De Lorme were riding forward.

As the road they followed drew closer to the wall, a spent shot would sometimes crash through the branches of the wayside trees, strewing the ground with their fragments, or go ploughing up the earth with a deeper furrow than was ever made by a Poitevin share. At length it ran directly under the angle of a redoubt; and five or six muskets were directed on the two riders. Down came De Lorme's horse, throwing its rider, and convulsed itself in the agonies of death.

"Run for your life," cried Duchenier, spurring on still faster, and placing himself in another moment in comparative security. "Come on as fast as you can," he continued when his companion reached him unhurt, "after me; we will go back together."

"Yes, monsieur," replied the man; and in five minutes Duchenier found himself in Cathelineau's troops. After two unsuccessful attacks, they had been drawn out of cannon shot, and were even then on the point of advancing for the third time.

"M. Cathelineau," cried Duchenier, "De Lescure's men are already in the ditch, and would have been on the ramparts before now, had their ladders been long enough. They tell me yours are longer. Can you spare any?"

"We have not too many ourselves," said Cathelineau; "but I think I can spare half a dozen.—Gresset," he cried, "take a dozen men with you, and do as M. Duchenier directs you:—or stay, will you not try this one charge with us, M. Duchenier?"

"Very well," said Duchenier; "I can overtake the men. Cross the river, my man, by the southern bridge, and then keep between it and La Nort."

After giving them time to get clear of his own division, Cathelineau gave the word to advance. Quickening their pace to a run as they approached the glacis, the men were almost halfway up it, when the republicans, both from its summit and from the ramparts of the town, poured in upon them such a fire, that it seemed hopeless to think of gaining the top. Astonished at their own freedom from wounds, Duchenier and Cathelineau found themselves, with ten or

twelve of the stoutest men, fighting hand to hand with the national guard, and safe from both ranges of cannon. It needed but a few moments to drop down on to the banquette, and to collect thirty or forty of their men around them.

"Out with this piece," cried Duchenier, "and point it at them. It will be murderous work when the smoke clears off, if we don't manage that."

Ten or a dozen hands were dragging the ponderous cannon back on the ramparts, and in a few moments it was fairly turned. The daylight was now sufficient to render both parties distinctly visible to each other, and to shew Duchenier that, for the moment, the cannons of the garrison could not be brought to bear upon them.

"Now for your scaling-ladders, Cathelineau," he cried.

They were passed up over the glacis; and it was evident, from the numbers clustering on the ramparts of the town, and from the anxiety which seemed evinced to depress the pieces as much as possible, that considerable alarm was felt. A sharp fire of musketry ran along the walls, which was returned by the Vendeans with good courage; and at the same time the tallest and hardiest of the men leapt into the ditch.

"Hand them down," cried Cathelineau, whose words were scarcely audible in the general confusion; "up by that bastion; don't you see that the tenaille is ruinous? we can make good a lodgment there."

"Take my hand, Cathelineau," cried Duchenier, who was already in the water.

Cathelineau was stooping forward to do so, when there was another sharp fire from the ramparts, and he staggered backward, and fell on the parapet. One or two of his men ran up to him.

"Take me out of the way, any where," said Cathelineau, in a low voice; "I am a dead man; and don't let it be known, if you can help."

"Is he hurt?" said Duchenier, from the ditch.

"We will take care of him," cried one of the men; and Duchenier, fearing to discourage the soldiers, made no further inquiry, but waded forwards to the ladder.

In the mean time, Cathelineau was carried back to the place where Duchenier had at first found him; and one of the priests, who always accompanied the Catholic army, having been summoned, the dying leader was left alone with him. Day broke; and although the absence of darkness was a considerable disadvantage to the Vendeans, the attack was still carried on with undiminished spirit. Never had the peasantry been persuaded to exert themselves for so long a time consecutively; and it needed all the courage and discipline of the veteran soldiers of the national guard to hold out against the enemies, of whom they had professed so hearty a contempt. As soon as the royalists retreated on one side, the attack was recommenced on another; Lescure had forced his way into the city itself; D'Elbée had driven-in the advanced guard at La Nort; and Duchenier, who, after Cathelineau had received his mortal wound, had taken upon himself the command of that body, had made good his lodgment on the covered way. Towards two o'clock in the afternoon, as if by mutual consent, there was a cessation of hostilities; and the various chiefs took that opportunity of riding to the tent where Cathelineau, now rapidly sinking, lay. D'Elbée, and Lescure, and Duchenier, and De la Rochejacquelein, were all there; Marigny, not knowing that the attack might not recommence at any moment, did not dare to absent himself from his post. Cathelineau seemed unconscious of all that was passing around him; he lay in a kind of dose, sometimes moving uneasily from this side to that; and Father Francis, who, like many of the Vendean priests, added some knowledge of physic to that of his own profession, gave it as his opinion, that he had not another hour to live. The tent was pitched on a rising ground; and the leaders, standing at the door, were conversing in a low voice.

"It is useless to stay here," said De la Rochejacquelein; "he will not know us again, and we have more important duties yonder."

"I am afraid you are right," said Lescure; "this pause must not last much longer. Yet I should like to have spoken to him once again."

As he spoke, the batteries on the further side of the town

opened their fire, and it was evident that Charrette was again leading his men on to the assault.

"It is time indeed for us to be going," said Duchenier; "he must be supported, or he will only be wasting his men for nothing."

"Hark!" said Lescure; "Marigny thinks so too; he has opened his fire upon them."

"Let us go, then," returned De la Rochejacquelein.

"You will have the kindness, father," said Lescure to the priest, "to assure poor M. Cathelineau that we have been all here in the hope of seeing him. You see yourself that it is impossible we should stay any longer."

"I will surely tell him so, my son; and now, GOD bless and keep you all. This is a great day for us."

Just as the chiefs were leaving the tent, Cathelineau opened his eyes. "Is that M. de Lescure?" he asked, in a faint voice.

Lescure was by his bed-side in a moment. "GOD's will be done," he said, "Cathelineau; you are better off than we are. It has pleased Him to take you away in the very moment of victory, and to give you the crown in the middle of the conflict."

"I could have wished," said Cathelineau, "to have been with you a little longer; but He knows best. I always looked for this, sooner or later; and so GOD, before whom I am just going to appear, judge me, as I could not wish for a holier cause in which to die."

"Is there any thing," asked D'Elbée, "which you would wish to leave in charge for us to do?"

"I have already said all that was necessary to this good father," replied Cathelineau. "I am sure I need not ask you to take care of my wife and children."

"There is not one among us," said Lescure, "who will not look upon them as if they were his own. We shall not see you again in this world, Cathelineau; for we must and ought to be at our posts. But I doubt not that we shall meet in a better place than this."

Cathelineau's eyes again closed, as if he were exhausted with the effort he had made, and a kind of grey shadow

began to steal over his face. "Go, my sons," said the priest, "he is just about to depart; leave me alone with him." With one more glance at the features of him who had been their general, the chiefs left the tent noiselessly, and the next moment were galloping to their respective positions.

Five minutes afterwards, a fresh roar of artillery from more quarters of the town gave proof that the besiegers had united in one general and desperate attack. In the midst of the thunder of the cannon, the shouts of the assault, and the cries of anguish or despair, the brave spirit of Cathelineau passed to that place where there is no more war.

The officers reined-up their horses together for a moment on the brow of the hill.

"Look, look, De la Rochejacquelein, we were right; the Blues are pouring out towards Rennes!"

"So they are, so they are! Order another assault on Cathelineau's side;" and, with five or six of the parishes, the leaders rode on. A grey old cross stood some hundred yards from the glacis, and, in the face of a galling fire from the ramparts, the Vendeans knelt before it for some five seconds. Such was the way in which the Catholic army vindicated its name.

On the top of the glacis, another full view of the city presented itself.

"Whose order is that?" cried De la Rochejacquelein, as a body of royalists met the fliers on the Rennes road, and checked their progress.

"Not mine," cried Duchenier. "It is that hot-headed Prince de Talmont. Fool, fool! if they are driven back, we are lost."

"Look to matters here; I will gallop to him, and draw him off."

That inconsiderate charge lost the Vendeans the city.

CHAPTER XVI.

WHO does not know how often it happens that one and the same hour brings with itself the crisis of two trains of events mutually connected, but passing at distances far removed from each other? So it was in the course of our story.

It was S. Peter's day; the very day on which Cathelineau fell before Nantes. But in the desecrated churches of revolutionised France there was no bell to welcome-in the great festival; there was no tribe of worshippers hastening to assist at the high mass; there was no merry meeting of the villagers, or the dance or the song, as the sun sank into the west. That day dawned on Paris like any other; the business of the trial or the guillotine went on as usual; and it seemed as if the murderers gained fresh strength from each act of cruelty, and as if the people took fresh delight in every spectacle of tyranny.

Three weeks had now elapsed since Danton had promised Marie Duchenier to interfere for the safety of her father and her husband, on the payment of the money which she had offered. Since that time she had only seen him once, and that was when, having obtained, not without difficulty, the sum which she had mentioned, she went to his house, in order to insure that it reached his hands. It was about a week before the time at which we have now arrived that she did so; and he then promised, and apparently with good faith, that her father should be set at liberty in the course of a few days, and that her husband should be released before the end of the month. To do him justice, he had really despatched an order to Carrier, at Nantes, desiring him to detain M. Duchenier; but to take care that his imprisonment should be as comfortable as things would allow, and that he should be forthcoming when wanted. But Carrier, who was as great

a man at Nantes as Danton was at Paris, paid no manner of attention to the directions sent him, and vaguely replied, that he should act in the matter according to the orders he had received.

Thus, then, Marie Duchenier, strictly forbidden to visit her father, and obliged almost entirely to confine herself to the Vieil Coq, passed a miserable week of suspense. The good landlord did all in his power to relieve her anxiety: he assured her that Danton's word was, to say the least, far more to be depended on than that of any of his colleagues; and that having overcome the first great difficulty, madame might reasonably hope for a happy issue to the business. Texier, who did not consider himself so closely confined to the inn, made several excursions in the direction of the Saint Lazare, in the hopes of acquiring some information as to the situation of the prisoners, though not daring to violate Danton's injunction by visiting the prison itself. In the mean time he brought in all the intelligence which he was able to gain of the proceedings of the Convention, and of the intentions of those who governed it; and in neither the one nor the other could poor Marie find any reasonable source of consolation.

At length, about nine o'clock on the morning of S. Peter's day, Madame Duchenier received a note from Danton, expressed in sufficiently civil terms, and desiring her to call on him at noon. There was no answer, the landlord said, and the man who brought the letter had gone away.

With some trepidation, but with nothing like the terror which she had felt at her first, Marie Duchenier prepared for her third visit to the terrible democrat. Punctual to the time, she again reached the house, and again was ushered into the presence of Danton. It appeared as though some slight attempt had been made to divest the apartment which he occupied of some part of its usual brutality; the floor and tables were restored to something like order, and Danton himself made as near an approach to civility as his nature would allow.

"Pray be seated, Madame Duchenier. I am glad that you obeyed my request at once."

"It was not likely, monsieur, that I should have any engagement which would prevent my doing so," replied Marie, with a sad smile. "My one only object in coming to Paris was to save my father's life: if I can accomplish that, I shall only too gladly return to my own country."

"Well, madame, there is the order for the release of your father, and there is one for that of your husband." And he laid them on the table.

"GOD bless and reward you, monsieur, for your kindness," said poor Marie, sobbing; and she stretched her hand out to take the precious documents.

"Stay!" said Danton, with a kind of laugh. "Did I not tell you, when we parted once before, nothing for nothing?"

"You said so, monsieur," replied Marie, half frightened by his manner; "but I thought—I thought—I believed that the ——"

"That the fifty thousand francs were in full payment of the debt," said Danton, drawing his chair nearer to that of his victim. "Not quite. They were a part of it, I confess; but there is something more."

"If more money is necessary," said Marie, "we will make every effort to raise it; but—I speak frankly, monsieur—I do not believe the wreck of my father's property will afford ten thousand francs more."

"Keep them and welcome," said Danton; "I spoke of something else." And bending over Madame Duchenier's shoulder, he whispered a few words in her ear.

Marie started to her feet, a deep, angry blush spreading to her very forehead. "Never, monsieur," she said vehemently. "Take back your papers; and leave go of me. GOD forgive me for having ever been deceived by you."

"Very well, madame," said Danton, coolly; "then hear what follows. In the first place, you leave this house for the prison, and that for the guillotine. In the next place, I write to Carrier, to hasten citizen Duchenier's trial—and you know what that means. And lastly, I pledge myself to bring your father to the guillotine before the week is out."

Marie made no answer. She could not have spoken without a flood of tears; and the loathing she felt for the monster who stood before her made her resolved not thus to humble herself before him.

"You won't speak?" said Danton, raising his hand, as if to strike her.

She paused a moment, and then said, with a firmness almost surprising to herself, "Yes, I will speak. GOD sometimes lets the wicked triumph in this world; but I do not believe that He will permit such enormous villany to succeed even here. You think to frighten me. Do I look as if I were frightened? Do with me as you like. I trust in GOD to protect me and those whom I love; and for you I feel nothing but the deepest contempt and loathing."

"Indeed!" said Danton. "Mark my words. To prison you shall go; and you shall see your father suffer before your own trial. You shall have a holiday on purpose," he added with a bitter laugh. He laid his hand on the bell, and then said, "I will give you one more chance. Do you accept my terms?"

"GOD forbid!" said Marie.

Danton rang the bell. "We shall see what comes of your trust in GOD. I never believed there was one; so if He wishes to prove there is, now will be a good time.—A hackney-coach to the door for this person, Sausette."

"There is one at the door, monsieur, that she came in."

"Very well. I will trouble you to step into it, Madame Duchenier," said Danton, rising, and laying his hand on Marie's shoulder. He thus moved her down stairs; scratched a few lines on a piece of paper with a pencil that he took from his waistcoat-pocket; bade the servant let down the steps; and then said, "I wish you joy, madame.—To La Bourbe, Sausette; and give this to the governor."

During her sad ride thither, Marie had full leisure to think over her miserable condition. Her only comfort was, that, as if by a sort of presentiment, she had not allowed Texier to accompany her. Her fate would at least be known; and it was but three days before that she had found what the landlord of the Vieil Coq had assured her was a very safe

opportunity to forward an account of her proceedings to M. de Lescure. To him she had told the whole; and had added that she expected a third interview with Danton in a day or two.

We must now shift the scene to the salon of the prison S. Lazare, the time being nine at night. Lights had just been brought in; the party assembled had the appearance of a fashionable drawing-room; no executions had as yet taken place; and it was believed—or rather hoped—that the imprisonment was rather intended as a kind of surveillance than with any ulterior motive. M. de Beaurepaire and Rose were in higher spirits than usual; they knew nothing of Marie's voluntary stay in Paris; and from having heard no ill tidings, which Naudet had faithfully promised not to conceal from them, they had persuaded themselves that she must be in safety.

Rose, who had become a general favourite, was seated at the piano, and was enduring the usual requests to sing.

"Well," she said at last, "if you really all so very much wish it, I will do my best." And she sang one of her Poitevin songs.

There was great applause at the conclusion; for Rose's voice, though it had possessed little advantage of training, was singularly sweet.

"M. de Beaurepaire," said a lady in deep mourning (her husband had perished six months before on the guillotine), "you have never yet favoured us. Pray, let us hear something."

"So asked," he said with a bow of the old school, "I cannot refuse." And he also sang as follows:—

Du haut de la voûte éternelle,
Jeune héros, reçois nos pleurs.
Que notre douleur solemnelle
T'offre des hymnes et des fleurs.
Ah! sur ton urne sépulcrale
Gravons ta gloire et nos regrets;
Et que la palme triumphale
S'élève au sein de ses cyprès.

Aspirez à ses destinées,
Guerriers, défenseurs de nos lois;
Tous ses jours furent des années;
Tous ses faits furent des exploits.
La mort, qui frappa sa jeunesse,
Respectera son souvenir;
S'il n'atteignit point la vieillesse,
Il sera vieux dans l'avenir.

Sur les rochers de l'Armorique
Il terrassa la trahison;
Il vainquit l'hydre fanatique,
Semant la flamme et le poison.
La guerre civile étouffée
Cède à son bras libérateur;
Et c'est-là le plus beau trophée
D'un héros pacificateur.

Qui, tu seras notre modèle;
Tu n'as point terni tes lauriers.
Ta voix libre, ta voix fidèle,
Est toujours présente aux guerriers.
Aux champs d'honneur on vit ta gloire,
Ton ombre, au milieu de nos rangs,
Saura captiver la victoire,
Et punir encor les tyrans.

Due commendations having been accorded to this song, an officer volunteered a ballad.

THE STORM OF CEUTA.[1]

"Upon them, men of Portugal,
When ye see me draw the sword;
And play ye, one and all, the man,
In the battle of the LORD!
Look on the heights of Ceuta,
That glitter in the sun;
And when Don John shall lead you,
The victory shall be won!

Think of the saintly squadron
In battle-line arrayed,
Whom that great warrior-angel
Is leading to our aid;

[1] August 15th, 1415.

Remember Her, the ocean's star,
The pure and mild of mien,
Assumed this day to heaven,
To reign its Virgin-Queen."

'Twas Zala-ebn-Zala
That stood upon the strand:
"Yet patience, sons of Islam,
The Christian dogs shall land;
Their lances rule Algarves,
Their galleys sweep the main;
But from our sunny Africa
We'll spurn them back again.

Ye know right well the victor's crown,
And the meed of them that die;
Allah and Allah's Prophet
Have spoke, and cannot lie.
Think of the houris' beauty,
And the homes that fear no ill;
And the everlasting lote-tree;
And the voice of Izrahil."

Don John hath made the signal,
And forth his squadrons leap,
Both barons, knights, and yeomen,
Though 'tis half a fathom deep;
And still they strain amidst the main
The hostile shore to reach;
And battleaxe and scimitar
Are clashing on the beach.

— In Santa Cruz at Coimbra
The monks were saying tierce,
And scantly through the windows
The storied sunbeams pierce;
When clanged the gates, and clashed the floor
Of God's serene abode,
And right—right up to the chancel-door
A kingly spectre rode.

Then abbat gazed at prior,
And monks together pressed;
And there was awe and terror,
And crossing of the breast

Till by the earl's fair coronet,
And by the well-scarred cheek,
They knew Affonso the Adored,
CHRIST's victor at Ourique.

"This day"—thus spake the royal form,
And the brethren hushed their breath—
"This day Don John at Ceuta
Must strike for life or death;
Yet let each heart be joyful,
Yet let each eye be bright—
I and my son Don Sancho
Are going to the fight!"

That very hour at Ceuta
Two kingly forms were seen,
Mounted on steeds as white as snow,
Of more than mortal mien;
No word they spake, no stroke they strake,
As they fell on the Moorish rank;
Yet before them still, as snow from a hill,
The accursed Crescent sank.

'Twas Zala-ebn-Zala
That rallied on his men:
"They are turning, sons of Islam,—
Upon them yet again!"
Then back rolled Christian yeomen,
And knights were sore distressed,
— When those two ghostly horsemen
Toward their succour pressed.

Don John among the Infidels
Hath hewn his bloody way;
Their squadrons close around him,
And he must stand at bay.
Alone amidst the foemen,
To his distant knights he cried;
— And those two ghostly horsemen
Were fighting by his side.

'Twas Zala-ebn-Zala
That gave his steed the rein,
And left ten thousand Infidels
To moulder on the plain;

And Christians, mingled with the Moors,
Through the city-gates have burst;
— But those two ghostly horsemen
Have entered it the first.

During the last verse of the song, Naudet had, with his usual preliminary knock, entered the room; but had remained quietly at its lower end. When it was over, and the applause had ceased, he came up to De Beaurepaire, and said gravely, but quietly, "Monsieur, might I request a few moments' private conversation with you in another room?"

"What!" cried De Beaurepaire; "have you ——" and then recollecting himself, he merely said, "I am at your service instantly." And he followed the gaoler, fully expecting that he was about to receive some intelligence of his daughter. Naudet led the way into a small but well-furnished room opposite the drawing-room; and then turning to De Beaurepaire, he said, "Monsieur, I am going to perform the most painful duty that I ever was compelled to undertake in my whole life."

"What have you heard, monsieur?" said De Beaurepaire, still thinking only of Marie. "Let me know at once."

"I grieve to say, monsieur," returned Naudet, "that you have, in some way which I cannot explain, incurred the displeasure of M. Danton; and it is by his orders that I am compelled to place you in La Souricière; and, I am sorry to add, to put you in fetters."

"Danton!" cried De Beaurepaire; "incurred Danton's displeasure! I was not even aware that he knew of my name."

"So it is, monsieur," replied the gaoler; "the cause I know as little as yourself; but, as you are aware, M. Danton must be obeyed."

"Very well," said De Beaurepaire; "I was afraid of worse news than this."

"I must trouble you, then, to follow me," said Naudet. And the two left the room together, and were accompanied by two turnkeys whom De Beaurepaire had never seen before; Naudet led the way into the hall, and then said, "M. de Beaurepaire, you will follow the under-keeper."

"Good night, then, monsieur," said De Beaurepaire, with his usual coolness. "I find it not quite so hot down here as it was up stairs. Gentlemen, I am at your service."

But De Beaurepaire's philosophy had nearly given way when he was escorted to the place that was designed for his reception. The turnkeys led the way, down a staircase which opened into the hall, and then along a subterranean passage, which, even on that summer night, struck deadly cold; and at last stopped before a door, strongly plated and barred with iron, and which opened into a little dungeon with a wet mud floor, and lighted by a grating which seemed to communicate, at a considerable height, with the garden of the prison.

"Now, monsieur," said one of the gaolers, "I must trouble you for your hands; and, Pierre, you can look to monsieur's legs." And without further remark, M. de Beaurepaire found himself fettered hand and foot.

"Really, gentlemen," he said, "this place is enough to give one the rheumatism; if you could bring down some mats, or rugs, or something of that kind, it would just add a little to my comfort; and if you will do me the favour to put your hands in my pocket, you may take a louis d'or a-piece for your trouble."

The turnkey did so without ceremony, and then said, "I will see what I can do, monsieur. I like to oblige a gentleman who keeps up a good heart."

Leaving M. de Beaurepaire in his prison, we must pause a moment to relate what happened to Texier the same evening; because that worthy peasant will hereafter be found to exercise no small influence over our tale. He had waited with considerable anxiety the return of his mistress; and when it drew towards eight o'clock, he communicated his apprehensions to Dommette.

After discussing the matter till nearly nine o'clock, "I will tell you what it is, my good friend," said the landlord; "I advise you to take yourself off from this house; if you have any regard for your neck. There's a screw loose; depend upon it, somewhere; and I think 'tis very likely that unpleasant inquiries will be made here before long for you. Is there any one in Paris to whom you could go?"

"Why, a fortnight ago," said Texier, "I should have said, no; but since that time I have found out a kind of second cousin of mine, who lives in the Barrière du Trône, just by the Fauxbourg S. Antoine, you know, who seems an honest kind of fellow, and who wished me to spend a few days with him. What do you think of my accepting his invitation to-night?"

"You cannot do better," said Dommette; and Texier accordingly went.

CHAPTER XVII.

It was a bright evening in July; the sun setting cloudlessly on the country, shot a red and lurid glare through the smoke of London, and lighted up S. Paul's with that spectre-like majesty in which it is sometimes invested by the last brightness of the west.

A gentleman, who, from his dress and general mien, was evidently a foreigner, might have been seen walking along the Strand towards Charing Cross; and every now and then looking with a somewhat hesitating glance to the names of the streets on his left hand, as if he had been directed to turn up some one of them, and was not exactly aware which to take. Whatever he might think of the appearance of the city, it is certain that, to an eye better acquainted with it than his, it wore that evening a very threatening aspect. Every chance scaffolding or boarding was placarded with a notice of a great meeting to be held at the Crown and Anchor, for the purpose of laying the distresses of the people before Government, and of expressing the sympathy of the patriots of England in the glorious triumph achieved by those of France over tyranny and superstition. "It was expected," the document proceeded, "that Mr. Thomas Paine would address the audience;" and another meeting was advertised to be held on Kennington Common on the succeeding morning; after which a large public entertainment would take place at the Horns. Government had reason to be apprehensive of some general outbreak; several regiments were quartered round London; a body of picked men had been thrown into the Tower, and the fortifications of that place had been surveyed and strengthened. Not, however, paying much attention to the placards, or to the state of the metropolis, the foreigner reached Charing Cross; and then, after a mo-

ment's hesitation, turned towards Westminster. He found it necessary before long to inquire, in very broken English, which was the way to Downing Street; and having received the required information, he stepped onwards somewhat more briskly.

To a room in that same street we must now request the reader to accompany us. It was somewhat shabbily furnished: over the chimneypiece hung a portrait of King George III., and between the two long dingy and ill-cleaned windows, another of the Prince of Wales. A table, which stood in the centre, covered with a cloth evidently the worse for use, was furnished with pens, ink, paper, a blotting-book, and some singularly large seals. In this room three gentlemen were, after the English fashion, standing round the shavings which filled the fireplace, and were at the moment laughing very heartily at a paper, as it seemed, which one of them had been reading from.

"Not at all bad that, not at all bad indeed," said he who seemed the most important personage of the three; "I wonder whose it is? Eh, who do you think, Greville?"

"Can't say, 'pon my honour," said the somewhat dandified personage addressed. "Let me see; there are plenty of them up to the thing; but the question is, Who understands German?"

"Well," said the one who had not yet spoken, "it was an uncommonly good idea, that I will say, to get up a paper of the kind; I sometimes wish though, that it had another name."

"Why so," said the first speaker, who was none other than Pitt; "why so, Mr. Chancellor?"

"Oh, I don't know," replied the Chancellor of the Exchequer; "Anti-Jacobin is too long a word. I dislike anti- any thing. However, this is about the best number they have had." And, taking up the paper, he began to read, with suitable intonation:

"There first for thee my passion grew,
Sweet, sweet Matilda Pottingeri;
Thou wast the daughter of my tu-
Tor, Lord Professor of the U-

Niversity of Gottingen,
Niversity of Gottingen."

"Hush!" said Pitt, as a knock was heard at the door of the official residence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, where the party were met, "that must be our man."

"I will put the paper on the table," said Greville; "it will look well."

At this moment a servant entered with a card, on which was written the name, "M. Duchenier."

"It is so," said Pitt. "Shew Monsieur Duchenier up at once."

The servant disappeared; and a moment afterwards ushered the foreigner, whom we lately saw in the Strand, into the room.

After the usual compliments had passed, and Duchenier was seated; "I believe, gentlemen," he said, in French, "that you are desirous of receiving some more accurate information as to the progress of the Royalist and Catholic army in La Vendée, than I was able to furnish in my letter of last Wednesday?"

"The truth is, monsieur," said Pitt, speaking in very excellent French, "that the information we have received, previous to your arrival in London, has been so extremely vague and unsatisfactory, that, desirous as my colleagues and myself are of taking every possible step for relieving the sufferers in France, we have found ourselves perfectly unable to come to any opinion on the propriety of assisting the insurrection which is represented as having taken place in some parts of Anjou and Poitou. I believe," he continued, addressing the Chancellor of the Exchequer, "that I am right in stating that, before we can arrive at any result, it is absolutely essential that we have a clear statement of the motives and principles of the insurgents."

"We came," said the Chancellor, "to that conclusion; and shall therefore be most happy to receive, M. Duchenier, any intelligence which you can give us on this point."

"Permit me first, gentlemen," said Duchenier, "to present you with my credentials."

And he handed a paper to Pitt, which that gentleman read to himself, the Chancellor looking over him as he did so. It ran thus:

"We, Henri d'Elbée, General commanding-in-chief, and the Members of the Superior Council of the Royalist and Catholic Army, do hereby authorise and appoint M. Charles Duchenier, acting major in the same army, to treat on our behalf with his Britannic Majesty's Ministers, and to agree to any terms which may be proposed by them, respecting the assistance to be afforded to the said Royalist and Catholic army. As witness our hands,

"HENRI D'ELBÉE.
DE DONNISSAN.
DE LESCURE.
HENRI DE LA ROCHEJACQUELEIN.
✠ N. BISHOP OF AGRA."

"It is perfectly satisfactory," said Pitt, when he had read it; "but how comes it to pass that M. Gaston's name is not mentioned in it?"

"M. Gaston, monsieur?" said Duchenier; "I do not recollect ever having heard the name."

"We were told," said the Chancellor, "and that on at least plausible authority, that he was at the head of the movement."

"There must be some strange mistake, monsieur," replied Duchenier; "I am sure that no person of that name was ever an officer in the army.—I beg your pardon; I do now remember, that there was a man named Gaston, who, I think, was a barber, who headed one of the outbreaks in the south, and, I believe, fell at Longwy."

"We must have been misinformed, then," said the prime minister. "Nor are the accounts we have heard of your motives less uncertain. Some say that your aim is simply to establish a federative republic; some tell us that the rising is in connexion with the Girondist outbreaks in the south of France; and by some we are informed that it is a *bonâ fide* attempt to reinstate the royal family in their capital."

"You may rest well assured, monsieur," replied Duchenier, "that we are what we call ourselves, Royalists. The greater part of Poitou and Anjou is in a state of insurrection; and there is no doubt that it will extend to Brittany and Normandy. But we have had no communication with any of the other insurgents in various parts of the country, nor have we reason to believe that they are influenced by the same motives as ourselves."

Pitt proceeded to inquire into the sum total of the forces which the united Poitevin and Angevin movement could bring into the field; into the manner in which war was carried on; the point to which it would be desirable that any British attack should be directed; the general character of the troops—their previous successes and reverses; to all of which he seemed to listen with great attention, and occasionally took a note of Duchenier's answer.

Candles had been brought in for nearly an hour before Duchenier rose to take his leave.

"We shall see you again," said Pitt, "before you leave London; in the mean time I wish to express to you my admiration of the energy which has been displayed by your countrymen, and my hope that we may feel it consistent with our duty to render that assistance to them which they so well deserve."

After a few more civil speeches on both sides, Duchenier left the room.

"Curious movement, that," said the Chancellor of the Exchequer; "but—but—not quite the thing for us."

"We shall see," said Pitt. "Now, Greville, we will release you; for I see you are in a hurry to be off."

"Why, 'pon honour!" said the young man, "I shall hardly have time to dress for the duchess's rout." And so the party broke up.

In the mean time, Duchenier was pursuing his way to the temporary lodgings he occupied in the city. It was now past ten; the night was cloudy; and the wretched lamps with which London was then said—by a kind of delicate irony—to be lighted, did little more than reveal the obscurity of the evening. It was no wonder, then, that, partly from the dark-

ness, partly from occupation in his own sad meditations, he should, on reaching Charing Cross, hurry forward down St. Martin's Lane, under the impression that he was retracing his steps to the city.

And his meditations might well be gloomy. Of Marie he had heard nothing previously to leaving France; the letter which she had forwarded to M. de Lescure did not reach the camp till some days after her husband's departure. Of the final success of the insurrection, his hopes were any thing but sanguine; the failure of the attack on Nantes dwelt much on his spirits, and he was not very well satisfied with the tone taken by Pitt in the late interview. As he thus reflected on his own position, he came to a stand-still in Seven Dials; and, for the first time, observed that the road he was following was not the same by which he had come. He looked round him in considerable perplexity: the miserable houses by which he was surrounded were all closed for the night; there was but one man to be seen, and he was cloaked and muffled up, and seemed any thing but a desirable guide; the watchman was probably asleep in his distant box; and Duchenier felt thoroughly puzzled. After walking round the various entrances by which the streets emptied themselves —so to speak—in that sink of misery, and deriving no possible guidance from their names, Duchenier struck up Queen Street, and, at its extremity, found himself again at fault.

This time, however, two gentlemen of respectable appearance were going down King Street to Long Acre; and Duchenier, quickening his steps, and addressing them in French, requested them to put him into his way.

"The way is very simple, monsieur," replied one of them in the same language; "you have but to keep straight down yonder; then to turn to your left, which will take you into Holborn; and then you must keep straight forward."

"I am much obliged to you, monsieur," said Duchenier; and he was proceeding forward, when the other, with some hesitation, said: "You are a native of France, monsieur?"

Duchenier bowed.

"You will probably, then, be interested in accompanying me. We are on our way to a meeting of the friends of that

unfortunate country; a branch of the Corresponding Society, in fact; and if you will give us the honour of your company, you will be able to judge of the feeling which is excited in your behalf."

"Too quick, too quick by half, Hardy," said the other.

"Not a bit," said Hardy: "I know the man, I think." And in the mean time Duchenier had made up his mind to accept the invitation; fully believing that it was intended as a tribute of sympathy to the French loyalists; though certainly somewhat astonished at the selection of that time and place for its meeting. The three walked on together; at length Hardy and his companion turned up a narrow passage, and entering some disreputable-looking mews, crossed the close and somewhat fetid court. A large room over a row of stables was lighted up; and ascending a creaking staircase, Hardy pushed open the door at the top, and ushered his friend and Duchenier on to a kind of platform. They were received with clapping and stamping by some forty or fifty persons, who appeared to compose the auditory; and, after requesting Duchenier to be seated, Hardy held a whispering conversation with two or three, who, it appeared, were to be the speakers, and who occupied the platform. While this went on, Duchenier looked round on the auditors; and could not conceal from himself that he had never beheld a set of men whose countenances gave a more unfavourable impression of their character. Every kind and degree of low debauchery seemed familiar to all; and the ferocious countenances of some might have authorised even a harsher judgment.

At length Hardy rose to speak; and Duchenier, who, though he spoke English with great difficulty, understood it much better, followed him as well as he could. At first he doubted whether he understood the speaker rightly; and when he was convinced that he did, he could hardly trust his ears. Every term of abuse and malignity was heaped on the memory of Louis XVI. and the whole royalist party; every eulogium was passed on the noble-minded effort of the people of France to shake off the yoke of tyranny and priestcraft. Even while he was thinking which way to extricate himself from the place, the orator proceeded:

"Yes, gentlemen, the fall of superstition in one country is but the prelude to its overthrow in the other. The people of England need but one master-mind to give the word; and the feeble sway of the dotard who now occupies the throne of this island will pass from him, as it did from his brother tyrant. France sympathises in our struggles, as we sympathised in her victory: this gentleman"—and he pointed to Duchenier—"will bear me out when I say so. France is alive to our rights, and the means by which we are to attain them; France approves the organisation of the Corresponding Society, and ——"

"Gentlemen," said Duchenier, rising, and speaking in French to those on the platform, "there is some mistake here. It is not France that has murdered her king, banished her priests, made herself drunk with the blood of her best and her bravest sons; it is an execrable faction which presumes ——"

He was interrupted by loud cries. "A spy! a spy!" "Turn him out!" "Hold him fast!" "Look to the door!" and one deep voice, at the further end of the room, cried out, "Cut his throat!"

Duchenier, as if by instinct, sprang to the door; but he was caught, and held fast. After a few moments' consultation with his companions, Hardy, a gentlemanly man, said:

"Monsieur, the mistake in this case is mine. I had mistaken you for some other person. Will you pledge your honour not to make mention of this meeting to any one?—more especially not to reveal it to Government? If you do not promise—" he continued, seeing that the other hesitated —"I am afraid that we shall be forced to pursue some painful course to ensure your silence."

After a moment's thought, Duchenier gave the pledge; and even then it appeared to him Hardy had some difficulty in procuring him liberty of egress.

At length he was permitted to depart; and with some difficulty he contrived, shortly after midnight, to make his way into the city.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TEXIER found that he had not miscalculated on the character of the relation with whom he had sought refuge. It was a worthy man of the name of Corday, by trade a gingerbread-maker; in his sentiments a thorough loyalist; but, through the necessities of the times, passing as a very decently disposed citizen. He willingly agreed to give his cousin lodging; and—it ought in justice to be said—would have done so had Texier had nothing to pay. As it was, he still had the hundred louis d'or which had been given him by De Beaurepaire; and an agreement, advantageous to both parties, was soon made between him and Corday. Texier's one great desire was still, if it were possible, to serve M. de Beaurepaire or his daughter, and he resolved not to leave Paris till it should too sadly appear that all hope of serving them was at an end for ever. As lists of those who perished by the guillotine were officially published, there was no difficulty in obtaining a correct knowledge of the victims; and for three or four days Texier perused these with the deepest interest, but with the comfort, at least, that none of those with whom he was connected had as yet suffered.

At the end of that time, he resolved, come what would, to pay another visit to the S. Lazare, and learn in what state his master was. Telling Corday that if he never returned, there would be nothing remarkable, he walked one afternoon to the prison in question; and, after stating his business, was, as usual, shewn into the portico room, and told to wait.

The turnkey was not long absent; and on returning, said, "You may follow me." With a feeling of something like terror, Texier descended the steps that led to the Souricière; and on the door being thrown open, found De Beaurepaire chained

like the meanest felon, in a place to which a common dungeon would have seemed liberty. His horror and surprise were so great that he could at first scarcely speak; and De Beaurepaire said, "I thought I should see you again, Texier, if it were possible. Tell me, before I hear any thing else, where is Madame Duchenier?"

The sad story was then related to De Beaurepaire, as far as his informant knew it; and it seemed to the unfortunate father, as if his only comfort had been snatched from him. "While I thought," said he, "that she was safe, it mattered very little what they did with me. But now —— Well, it will be soon over for both of us. My turn comes to-morrow, they tell me; and so sure as I go to trial, I shall go to the guillotine."

Texier inquired still further, and learnt that Rose Le Grand, with her father, who had been sent in a prisoner from Mirebeau, were to be tried at the same time by the revolutionary tribunal. There did not seem the slightest ground for hope that any one of the three would by any chance be saved.

"Well, monsieur," said Texier, at length, when his visit had been extended to nearly half an hour, "never give up hope as long as you have life. I may be able to do something for you,—at all events I will try; and if it can be done, it shall be."

"You, Texier!" said De Beaurepaire; "you must be deceiving yourself. For myself I care not one doit; the pain they tell me is nothing, and as for the rest I must run the risk. But when I think of my daughter, I own that I should wish for a few days' longer life. If I knew her fate, I should care nothing for my own. And poor Mademoiselle Le Grand, too! Old men like her father and I ought to care very little about the matter; but it be must a hard thing to go just as life is opening."

"Be on the look-out, monsieur," said Texier. "I will risk every thing for you.—Here comes the turnkey—I will wish you good evening, monsieur."

"Do you think I could see M. Le Grand?" he inquired of the turnkey as they ascended the stairs of La Souricière.

"Oh, yes!" replied the other, "if he likes it. What is your name? Texier? I will go and ask him." And in consequence of the message, Texier was in a few moments ushered into the salon.

The three weeks which had elapsed since we last visited that drawing-room had made a fearful change in its inmates. Voices that had then been gay were now hushed in death; places that had then been occupied by the beauty or manliness of aristocratical France were now vacant; the room seemed half empty; instead of the cheerful buzz of general conversation, there was a desultory hum from five or six scattered knots; several of the prisoners leant their heads on their hands, and seemed to shun the conversation of their neighbours. Rose and her father were seated together on a sofa, and were conversing in a low voice.

When Texier approached them, he was quite overwhelmed with their questions. Where was Madame Duchenier? How was she? Had any intelligence been received of her husband? or from La Vendée? and a thousand inquiries of a similar kind. Texier answered to the best of his ability; and then said, "They tell me, monsieur, that your trial comes on to-morrow?"

"*Parbleu!* they tell you truly," said the ex-mayor; "and it would have been still more true to have said our murder."

"You must hope the best, monsieur."

"Ay," said Le Grand; "I think there's a verse in the Bible—or if it is not there, it's somewhere else—'the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.' We must hope for the best of them, I suppose."

"I fear, good Texier," said the sweet voice of Rose, "that we must not flatter ourselves. GOD'S will be done. After all, we are in His hands, and not in theirs."

She spoke very calmly; but her face was pale, and bore the appearance of great suffering. Her hair, which she had hitherto worn after the then Poitevin fashion over her shoulders, was now dressed *à la guillotine*, as the phrase went; that is, turned up very tightly and short from the neck, the female sufferers being naturally anxious, as much

as possible, to escape all interference of the executioner on the scaffold.

"An effort will be made to-morrow," said Texier, speaking low, "to set you free, if you are condemned, on your way to the *Place de la Revolution*. All I can now tell you is, that you must be on the look-out; the success is not in our hands."

"You are a good fellow, Texier; you are a very good fellow," replied Le Grand. "Depend upon it, we will not be wanting to ourselves."

"Thank you, Texier; thank you," said Rose; "but it will be in vain. Don't throw away your own life to no purpose."

"Time's up," said one of the officials, entering the room, with a manifest decrease of respect from what had at first been paid to the prisoners; and Texier and another visitor left the Saint Lazare.

On leaving the Saint Lazare, Texier, whose natural shrewdness had been very much fostered by the force of circumstances, and especially by the peculiar character of Vendean warfare, walked down to the Rue S. Honoré. He well knew that the fatal tumbril passed down that street daily on its way to the Place de la Revolution; he had never yet had the heart to mingle among the crowd which followed its progress; and he was desirous of becoming acquainted with the principal features of the street, before coming to a decision on his plan. He had almost reached the lower end, when, as he was looking at the houses on the right-hand side, which stand by the Rue Dupliot, he was astonished at seeing the man Dreux leaning against the wall, at the opening of a very narrow and, truth to say, very filthy passage, leading from that street. The recognition was mutual.

"Ah, M. Texier," said Dreux, "how in the world came you here? Why, you seem rather melancholy."

"I may well be melancholy," said Texier, "for I am afraid that to-morrow I shall lose the best and kindest master that ever man had."

"What, so?" asked Dreux, and he drew his finger across the back of his neck.

Texier nodded assent.

"I wonder," said Dreux, "that you are not afraid of it yourself. You'll burn your wings at last."

"I care not a straw," said Texier, "what they do to me, so I only knew how to get my master out of their clutches."

"The same old gentleman," inquired the actor, "that I spoke to your young lady about?"

"The same," answered Texier.

"Why, what can you do for him?" said the other.

"I don't know," said Texier, "and that's the plain truth; but if I don't do something, my name's not Pierre Texier."

"Well, come," said Dreux, "here's a bargain; I'll help you, and you shall help me."

"Why, how can that be?" said Texier, somewhat suspiciously.

"Just thus," said Dreux. "I haven't a single sous, and, for aught I see, am not like to have one. You shall give me enough to get a good supper to-night and a good breakfast to-morrow; and if I can help you in saving your master, you or he shall make me a present of twenty louis d'or. If I don't play my part well, off will go my head; and then, you know, I shall not want any thing more to eat."

"But are you not afraid of the risk?" said Texier.

"Risk! Not I; my life is something like M. Sinbad's shoes, it sticks to me pretty tight. But the plain truth is, I don't care a single snap either for this world or the next; and men who are in that way somehow contrive to get out of scrapes wonderfully. Nought's never in harm's way, you know."

"Well," said Texier, "as to this world, I care as little for it as most men; and you, my good friend, would fare none the worse for taking a little more care about the next. But as to my part of the bargain, I am ready enough to make it. What is yours to be?"

"There's a snug little café on the other side of the Place Vendôme, where I sometimes go: let us walk that way, and I will tell you. Why, I have often thought, how very easy a thing it would be, if a few determined fellows made a rush at any one in the tumbril, to get him clear off, before the officers

could look about them. There are never more than eight or ten of the city-troops that ride before, and one or two more that sit in the cart; and as to the people, they are pretty well tired of the sight now, and I think would just as soon see a man get off as not."

"But where can one get four or five men?" asked Texier.

"I know of one or two," returned Dreux; "but that won't be enough in itself. If we could contrive to upset the cart, it would add vastly to the confusion, and give us a better chance of getting any one off."

"If we could," said Texier; "but how is that to be done?"

"I think I could manage that," said Dreux; "but we must have a long talk to-night. Where shall it be?"

"I am lodging," said Texier, "in the Barrière du Trône; will you come down there?"

"The Barrière du Trône!" said Dreux; "that is a long way off. No, you had better come to me. My lodgings are in the passage where you saw me first. It looks like a *cul-de-sac*, but it is not; and, by the way, that will be very much to our purpose."

"I must go back first," said Texier; "what time shall I be with you?"

"To-morrow morning will do just as well as to-night. Come down to me at nine o'clock; I will take care to have arranged matters."

"Very well," said Texier.

"Here we are at the café," said Dreux. "Now I will bid you good by, when you have given me the wherewithal to get a supper."

"I have only this with me," returned Texier, taking out a louis d'or and a five-franc piece; "will that be sufficient for to-night?"

"I should rather think so," answered Dreux; and the two parted.

It was nearly ten before Texier reached the Barrière du Trône, and he found that his worthy cousin was in great perturbation as to his fate. "Before you go to bed," said

Texier, "I should like to speak to you for a quarter of an hour;" and Corday said, "Very well."

Supper over, and the family and apprentices sent to bed, the gingerbread-factor prepared for the conference by unlocking a certain cupboard of which he kept the key, and producing therefrom a bottle of cherry-brandy and some glasses. Having tasted it with his usual preface, "Not so bad, is it?" he continued, "Well, what now?"

Texier related his whole design, and the tradesman was sorely aghast when he heard it. He called it madness, frenzy, absurdity, and many other names of a similar kind; but Texier stuck to his colours. "Never you be afraid," said he. "I should be a villain indeed, supposing I am taken, to say any thing which could get you into a scrape. There is only one thing I want you to do for me: if I don't come back, write a letter to M. de Lescure, and tell him what I have told you. Then if you take it to the Vieil Coq, Rue du Cherche Midi, and mention my name to the landlord,—he is called Dommette,—he will forward it for you. Will you promise me this?"

"I will," returned Corday; "but I wish, Pierre, you would be persuaded into something like reason."

"You cannot do it," said Texier, smiling. "Now go to bed; it is late. I shall be off to-morrow before you are up."

"At least," said Corday, "take another glass of this before you go."

"No, no," said Texier, "no Dutch courage for me. Besides, I have a good deal to think about. So good night."

Punctual to his agreement, Texier was in the Rue Dupliot as the distant chime of Notre Dame de Lorette told the quarter to nine, and found his worthy friend in pretty near the same position in which he had first seen him.

"Rather before your time, Maître Texier," said he. "However, come in." And he led the way down the passage we have mentioned, and opening the door of a most disreputable-looking house, he mounted a crazy staircase *au second*, which he said he preferred as more airy. The furniture of the room consisted of a dirty deal-table and three chairs, one of which appeared to be there in honour of the

occasion; and a kind of mat or rug, with a couple of things which might originally have been blankets, stowed away into one corner, and which had doubtless formed the actor's bed on the preceding night. Standing by the fire-place was a tall, well-made, and fine-looking man, though bearing very much the appearance of a practised thief, which, indeed, he seemed to make no scruple in confessing he was. Dreux introduced him by the name of the Marquis de Vertot, observing that that would do as well as any other. We should observe that breakfast, of a character far superior to the room, was on the table; and the actor, begging his friends to be seated, proceeded to the business of the meal.

"We have been talking over this little business, M. Texier," began Vertot, "and I think it shews a very great degree of good judgment in my friend here. It's rather a reputable thing to be engaged in. My price, monsieur, would be fifty louis-d'or, succeed or not."

"Well," said Texier, "if you succeed, I will pay them gladly; and if not," he added, with hesitation, "I suppose the want of success will not be your own fault."

"I am never angry," said Vertot, "with a man for doubting me till he has proved me, or else your question might be rather personal. But come, to shew you that I am in earnest, will you say seventy if you succeed, and thirty if we fail?"

"That will be a better arrangement," said Texier, who had been attentively watching his new companion, and making his own observations. He knew well that the ordinary rogues of the metropolis were the only persons who were totally indifferent to all political questions, and that they pursued their profession under the republic just as they had done under a monarchy. He rightly conjectured Vertot to be one of these, and was rather disposed to judge, from his general demeanour, that he was an example of honour among thieves.

"Well, then, monsieur," said the gentleman whom he had been mentally criticising, "my plan is this:—You must let us know, when the tumbril gets opposite this lane, whether the gentleman in whom you are interested is on board

it or no; though, to be sure, there's not much doubt about that, if he goes before the tribunal to-day; they've been as fierce as tigers lately. If he is, M. Dreux, here, will take care that a wheel comes off, just in the proper place; I have taught him the trick of that; I'll get a friend of mine to kick up a row in front, without knowing any thing further of the business; and then you and I will make a pounce upon monsieur, and carry him down this passage, and through the back door of this house. Then you must have a cabriolet waiting; and the man must be paid to go like the wind in exactly the opposite direction to which you want monsieur to get."

"Well," said Texier, "all that arrangement I had better leave to you. The best place I can think of is in the Barrière du Trône; I know that he would be safe there for the present; and we might get him off by night into the country."

"Very well," returned Vertot. "I will put the man up to what he has to do."

"One thing more," said Texier. "There is another person I should like, if possible to save; and that is a young lady."

"It makes no odds to me," said Vertot; "but I can tell you, you preciously lessen their chance. I advise you to make sure of one; and be guided by circumstances about the other."

"Well said, marquis," cried Dreux. "Another cup of chocolate?"

"If it must be so, it must," said Texier, finding that he must at least leave Le Grand to his fate. "What time does the cart usually pass?"

"About three," replied Dreux, "or a little later. Therefore, I propose that you treat us here to dinner at half-past one."

"Order it," said Texier, "as you like. But you will not forget to arrange about the cabriolet, M. Vertot?"

"Depend upon me," answered that gentleman. And breakfast being now pretty well concluded, he departed, as he said, on that errand.

When he was gone, "Do you think," inquired Texier, "that I could get into the tribunal? I should very much like to hear what's going on."

"Oh, easily," replied the actor. "I'll go with you, if you like; only let's order dinner first."

The two accordingly sallied out to the nearest café; and Dreux gave orders for such a dinner as his taste approved. This done, they proceeded to the revolutionary tribunal, which at that time happened to be sitting in the Luxembourg; its more ordinary place of assembly being then under repair. The approach to the room in which the business of the commission was going on was not so much crowded, Dreux said, as it had been at first; the popular taste for such spectacles having somewhat declined. The chamber itself was a handsome one, the ceiling being decorated with various allegorical figures; among which, as if in mockery of the scene, Justice and Mercy were prominent. The upper end was raised by a kind of platform; the six judges sat round a table in its centre; the two assessors a little below them; and the jury on two forms, arranged against one of the side-walls. The prisoners were brought in by a side-door, under a strong guard, and placed, one by one, in a dock erected for their reception in the centre of the room.

"Please to buy a list, gentlemen," said a miserable-looking woman, as Texier and Dreux entered the passage leading to the hall. "Sixteen prisoners this morning, gentlemen; and one of them an officer in the Vendean army."

"Give it here," said Dreux; and tossing the vendor a couple of centimes, he took the paper. Texier glanced his eye over it, and saw, in alphabetical order, Beaurepaire, Claude, late officer in the Vendean army; Le Grand, Pierre, late Mayor of Mirebeau; Le Grand, Rose.

"They are here, sure enough," he said; and they passed on.

Just as they entered the room, one of the assessors was demanding, after the English fashion, which was professedly followed, "How say you, gentlemen, Guilty, or not guilty?" And the foreman of the jury, which was entirely composed of government stipendiaries, and hardly ever took the trouble

of retiring to consult, replied instantly, "Guilty;" and immediately proceeded with the conversation which he had broken off to pronounce the verdict.

The prisoner, a lady, with an infant in her arms, was removed into the guard-house. The next name called by the usher was that of De Beaurepaire, who came forward with great alacrity.

"A fine morning, gentlemen," he said to some of the bystanders, "and pleasantly cool for the time of year."

"Claude de Beaurepaire," said the president.

"And your very obedient servant," he answered.

"You were an officer in the Vendean army?"

"You are misinformed, monsieur."

"Well, then, you served in the Vendean army?"

"So did better men than I, monsieur."

"You confess, then, that you did?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"Gentlemen," to the jury, "you hear what the prisoner says. I do not think we need trouble you by going further in the business."

"Oh, by no means," replied the foreman; "our minds are quite made up."

"How say you, then, Guilty, or not guilty?"

"Guilty, monsieur."

De Beaurepaire made a polite bow to the president, another to the jury, shrugged his shoulders, and said, "There's nothing like expedition in these little matters;" and was then handed off to the guard-house.

"Dreux," whispered Texier, "I have had enough of this; let us get out as soon as we can."

"As you please," replied the actor; and the two companions walked slowly back to his lodgings.

They remained quietly there till the time named for dinner approached; and then Vertot, true to his promise, returned. "Well," said he, "I have done all that can be done. I have engaged the cabriolet to be in waiting at the end of the Boulevard de la Madeleine; I have spoken to a friend or two to be ready to raise a disturbance at the right time; and now, if we cannot make something out of this,

we deserve to look out of the little window. — Ah, Dreux, my boy! dinner ready?"

"Here it comes, marquis," replied Dreux. "Let us fall to; for we have not too much time."

The meal was eaten with as much speed as was consistent with taking ample care to satisfy the appetite; and by the time it was finished, there was still another hour to wait. Texier could not conceal his agitation; he walked hurriedly up and down the room; and neither the jests of the actor, nor the relations of various adventures in which he had been engaged, with which Vertot endeavoured to amuse him, could divert his mind for one instant from the great stake which he was about to throw.

When the chimes told a quarter to three, Vertot said, "I think we may as well be going down, Dreux."

"I am ready," cried the actor, starting up:

'Donnez Heraclius au peuple qui l'attend!'

You have taken care that the back-door is left open?"

"Yes; and I will hasp back the lock of this,"—for they were now in the hall.

"Come, then, with me, M. Texier," said Vertot, "and I will shew you the exact place where the cabriolet is."

We must pause a moment to describe the position of the house. The Rue Dupliot, the Boulevard de la Madeleine, and the Rue de Luxembourg form a right-angled triangle; the right angle touching the great church of La Madeleine. The southern point of this triangle is just truncated by the Rue S. Honoré; and the passage, in which Dreux had thought fit to take lodgings, opened on its right side, ran through the triangular mass of buildings parallel to the Rue de Luxembourg, and almost extended to the Boulevard de la Madeleine. The back-door of the house in which the actor lived opened on another *cul-de-sac* which led right on to that Boulevard. New buildings have now usurped the site of these houses; but we describe them as they were fifty years ago.

The cabriolet was found waiting; the driver seemed perfectly to understand; and, as Texier and Vertot walked back again, the latter said: "You see, M. Texier, that if you get

off both Monsieur and Madame, there will be no room for you; so that you must take care of yourself. And now, as we shall probably miss each other in the confusion, where can I go for the little sum we named?"

"If we fail," replied Texier, "you will not have occasion to go anywhere; for here are the thirty louis d'or;"—and he put them into his hand. "If we succeed, come to M. Corday, Barrière du Trône. I have acquainted him with my intentions; only, as he does not know you, you had better bring M. Dreux with you, in case any thing happens."

"*Bien obligé*, monsieur," said the marquis, pocketing the fee. "Now it is high time."

"How long you have been!" cried Dreux, who had been waiting for them in the hall. "We ought to be out of doors."

The three accordingly issued forth, and presently were in the Rue S. Honoré. People were already at the windows, and at the doors, to see the tumbril pass by; and when it struck three, eyes began to be cast up the street, in expectation of its making its appearance. The accomplices, who each had a good thick oak-stick—the most serviceable weapon, Vertot said—stood coolly leaning against the corner of the Rue Dupliot; and two other men stationed themselves at the opposite side of the street. "Those are our friends," said Vertot quietly to Texier.

"We have a great advantage," said Dreux, "in the procession coming the opposite way from what it has lately done. That will confuse them in itself."

"There is something in that," remarked Vertot. "A month ago, M. Texier, there was far more interest excited in Paris by these executions; the streets used to be thronged three quarters of an hour before the cart passed."

"The Rue S. Honoré is pretty full," said Texier.

"Ay, but nothing to what it was.—Hark! that must be it."

Above the buzz and murmur of the voices in the street, a low dismal hum was heard to the south-west; and presently, turning the corner from the Rue Royale, a dense mass of the Parisian rabble poured into that of S. Honoré. Windows were thrown up, doors opened, men rushed into the street,

and Dreux, merely saying, "I'm off,"—walked up it, as if to get close to the cart. The S. Honoré was now full of a living mass, pouring and struggling onwards to the Place de la Revolution. Texier, and even his more experienced companion, had some difficulty in holding their ground; and it was occasionally only by a great effort of strength that they succeeded in resisting the tide of the mob. Once or twice Vertot—a man of no small eminence in his own way—interchanged a nod with some gentleman of his profession; and once he said to one of them, "Just keep about, and give us a helping hand, if you can." Texier stood gazing eagerly for the tumbril; and his heart beat audibly to himself, in the intensity of his excitement.

At length the caps of the national soldiers were seen above the crowd; and, mounted on their sleek steeds, they approached the adventurers. Immediately behind them ought to have come the cart; but a considerable number of the rabble had insinuated themselves between it and the soldiery. Dreux was walking by the side of the car. It was a large open waggon, drawn by two stout horses; the prisoners, each slightly manacled, were seated on a bench, which ran round the whole vehicle, like the seat of an omnibus; and exposed to the jeers and outrages of the people, as they passed along.

"That is he! that is he!" whispered Texier; "that gentleman on this side,—close up to this end; there,—he who has just looked round; and that is the young lady next him."

"I see," said Vertot, coolly; "you take her; I'll take him."

"Maheutre of a royalist!" cried Vertot's accomplice in the crowd; "you are picking my pocket!"—And he dealt him a tremendous blow with a cudgel over the head.

"You lie!" said the man, returning it with his fist.

"It's you who are the liar!" cried a second speaker. "I saw him do it, gentlemen; don't let him go."

"*Belître!*" cried another, "he did not; I was by him."

"Take that, *pendard!*"—and a battle-royal commenced between the speakers. The guards, who had already passed, tried in vain to rein-round their horses—the press was too great; a dead pause in the procession was the consequence,

and the tumbril stood quite still. Dreux, who was close to it, passed his hand down to the nave of the great near wheel, felt the linch-pin, and, while amusing the guards behind with the epithets which he bestowed on the wretched victims, pulled it out. They, meanwhile, sat still, apparently resigned to their fate. Le Grand said to his daughter, "This delay is tiresome;" but she made no reply. Next to him sat a little girl, who could not be more than twelve or thirteen; she was crying bitterly: but she was the only one who exhibited much emotion. She seemed quite alone.

"Never mind, my dear," said an old officer kindly, who sat opposite to her; "never mind, my dear; you will soon be in Heaven." And a lady, who had just been separated from her own children, threw her arm round the little innocent, and drew her to her side.

"Move on there! Move on!" shouted the guards behind.

Dreux had now made his way back to his companions. "It is all right," he said.

"What are you about there, you fools?" shouted Vertot. "Can't you stand out of the way?"

The uproar was presently a little quieted, the dragoons backing-in their horses on the contending parties; and something like order being restored, the procession again moved on; though words still ran high in front of the car. Just as it reached the corner of the Rue Dupliot, off came the heavy wheel, and over rolled the waggon. A shriek burst from the prisoners; as if any fate could be so dreadful as that to which they were going.

"Now," cried Vertot.

In a moment Texier threw himself on Rose, and bearing her off in his left arm, opened a passage with his right for her and himself. He ran up the passage—found the door open—burst through the house—emerged on to the Boulevard—and threw, rather than placed, his prisoner in the cabriolet.

"Where is the other?" said the driver.

Where, indeed? Vertot had grasped him by the collar; and, assisted by Dreux, had drawn him off. They rushed up the passage; but could not make their escape so quickly

as not to be pursued by a dragoon, and one or two of the bystanders. Still they reached the house, — slammed the door in the face of the pursuers, — and, could they have drawn the bolt, they would, in all probability, have been safe. But the coat of Vertot caught in the door, and prevented its hasping; they could not get the bar into the socket; two or three soldiers had come up; the door was forced open; one of the dragoons drew his pistol, and shot Vertot through the head; another attempted to cut down Dreux; and, to save his own life, he was forced to leave go of De Beaurepaire. He leapt through the passage, banged-to the back-door, which locked itself—this baffled for a moment the pursuers—reached the Boulevard, and cried, "Off, off!"

"Where's my master?"

"Taken—off! off!"

The driver struck the horse; Texier stood sullenly back; and the cabriolet hurried along the Boulevard des Malesherbes.

"Vertot is dead; what do you mean to do?"

"It matters very little, since we have failed."

"Let us get round to the *Place*. Quick! they will never think of looking for us there."

"No go!" cried the soldier, who had collared De Beaurepaire. "A very pretty attempt, though; and does the fellow credit"—kicking, as he spoke, the corpse of Vertot.

"Not quite a failure, neither," said De Beaurepaire, with a smile.

"Morbleu! the girl has got off!" cried one of the men. "Hold him fast, Epernay;—follow me, *mes amis*." With a violent effort they broke open the back-door; but, on coming out on the Boulevard, found not a soul in sight. The soldier hurried back to make his report to the officer commanding the escort.

When De Beaurepaire was brought back, the damage had been repaired; the military, with drawn swords, drew close round the cart; and the fate of the prisoners was sealed. None was missing, except Rose.

"I congratulate you, M. le Grand," said De Beaurepaire, brushing off from his clothes the dust which they had contracted in his fall.

"Is she safe? are you sure of it?"

"Perfectly sure, monsieur; look at the sour faces of these coquins!"

"Hold your tongue, citoyen!" said the officer.

"Permit me first, monsieur, to congratulate you on the vigilance you displayed just now.—Seriously, M. le Grand, the thing is past a doubt."

"I wish," said the mayor, "you had been equally successful."

"It was a near point," answered De Beaurepaire. "Whoever managed the business shewed a good deal of tact.—Ah! there's the termination!"

As he spoke, the car came in sight of the guillotine, and of the dense mass of heads that surrounded it. Its general appearance is so well known that it is almost needless to describe it. Like a gallows, but narrower, the sides of the uprights were grooved, to allow the fatal steel to run up and down in them. The block at the bottom was about two feet thick—a kind of beam, generally rolling on wheels, moved up to it; to this beam the prisoner was attached, so that his head, on being pushed up to the frame, rested on the block. The steel itself was triangular, the lower edge being on the slope, so that it acted rather as a knife than a hatchet. It is well known that the benevolent inventor of this machine, Dr. Guillotine, whose only aim had been to abbreviate human suffering, by rendering certain the blow in which the executioner often failed, died of a broken heart when he saw the atrocities to which it had been perverted.

The sun, which had latterly been under a cloud, burst forth in autumnal splendour as the tumbril drew up at the steps of the scaffold. The buzz of voices ceased; the prisoners were handed up one by one; and, on the platform, Santerre was ready to meet them. It was a favourite amusement of his to attend the scene of death.

"Ah! M. le General!" cried De Beaurepaire, "I was sorry not to be able to notice you when we last met."

"*Coquin!*" cried Santerre; "you shall pay dearly for that trick now."

"*Eh bien!*" said De Beaurepaire. "But observe, M.

le General, one of the prisoners whom we took from you at La Flèche, and whom you expected to find here, is not in your power."

"What do you mean?" roared Santerre in a fury.

"Ask monsieur." The truth was soon told; and the unfortunate commander of the escort was ordered into custody.

"I have a treat for you, citoyen," he said, producing a copy of the *Moniteur* from his pocket.—"You little wretch, how dare you make all that noise?" turning fiercely round to the child whom we have mentioned, and whom the lady who had taken charge of her was in vain endeavouring to console.

"And shall I see mamma in heaven?" she asked.

"Ha! ha!" roared Santerre.

"Be silent, monsieur," said the lady with so much real dignity that the ruffian slunk away abashed.—"Yes, dear little one; you will see her, and she will be so happy—oh, how happy!—to have her little girl again; and nothing can ever take you away from her any more."

"I know it," said the child; "she used to tell me so before these wicked men took her away from me."

"But, my dear child," said a venerable priest who stood by—not a prisoner, but one who, like the Abbé Edgeworth, of pious memory, took his life in his hands to console the victims—"you must forgive these men; else GOD will never take you to live with Him."

"So I do," she answered; "every day I say, Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us."

"Pshaw!" cried Santerre. "Houssain, you may begin with her."

The little sufferer almost involuntarily clung to the dress of her protectress. "My dear child," said the latter, gently removing her hands, "I can do nothing for you now; GOD will take care of you. If He takes care of you, you are just as safe, you know, lying down there, as if you were lying down on your own bed."

"Now, ma'amselle," said the official, laying his hand on her shoulder.

"I will do that, monsieur," said the lady.—"Now, my little one, you must let me untie your bonnet." The child made no further resistance; and her friend proceeded to render her the last earthly service by turning up her hair.

"Good bye, my darling," she said; "and yet it is hardly worth while to say so—we shall meet again in a few moments."

"Kneel down, my daughter," said the good priest. The child obeyed. And he continued—"GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, GOD the HOLY GHOST, bless, preserve, and keep thee—that thou mayest die the death of the righteous, with whom thou shalt live for evermore."

The lady then led her foster child forward, and stood by her while she was fastened to the wood. "Be as quick as you can," she whispered to the man. The tray was wheeled up to the block; and almost before there was time for thought, the spring was touched, the steel rattled down, and the little victim's fear and pain was over for ever.

"Death, after all," said the lady to the priest, "has very little sting!"

"Look to Him, my daughter, Who has plucked it out, and you shall find it to be so."

De Beaurepaire had watched the whole with deep interest. While they were unfastening the body, he shuffled up to Santerre, as well as his manacled feet would let him, and said, "Santerre, you villain of a butcher, if I had a dagger, and it were my last act, I would plunge it into your heart. As it is, take that!"—and he struck him a violent blow on the face.

Santerre bellowed with rage and pain, and poured out a volley of oaths. "I'll be revenged," he said. "You, Houssain—you, fellow—look after this villain, and put him down with his face upwards, just as you did that officer the other day." De Beaurepaire was accordingly fastened in that manner to the tray, and wheeled under the guillotine; so that he could see the steel suspended over his throat.

"You absurd fool!" he said; "don't you think I can shut my eyes?"

"But not your ears," said Santerre, with a diabolical grin. "Don't let go till I give the word, Houssain. Keep

quiet round there. Now, listen; I am going to read you something from the *Moniteur*. 'We rejoice in the accounts which we announce of the success which the reinforcement received by the national armies in La Vendée, from the late garrison of Mayence, is obtaining over the brigands.'" And so he proceeded reading, for nearly half an hour, the columns of the newspaper, while his victim hung between time and eternity. But he had mistaken the man he had to deal with. When he had concluded, and had replaced the paper in his pocket, "Well, monsieur," he said, "what think you of that?"

"Eh, what?" said De Beaurepaire, opening his eyes. "Why, what a long time the thing takes. I think I must have been asleep!"

Santerre, enraged at being baffled to the last, gave the sign; and De Beaurepaire's head fell on the scaffold.

"Mark my words," said Texier, in the crowd, to Dreux. "If I don't take that man's life, by fair means or foul, and if I don't give up my whole existence to that one end, I hope that I may have my lot with him hereafter. Don't let's stay to see any more."

Before, however, they could leave the crowd, poor M. le Grand, who wanted very much to address the mob, was cut short in his intended harangue; and consoled himself by saying, that he died like Vergniaud.

CHAPTER XIX.

We must now go back a little, in order that we may take up the histories of various personages in whom we are interested, and may carry them forward a few months beyond the time at which we have arrived.

The capitulation of Nantes had set a body of fifteen thousand veterans, who had formed its garrison, at liberty to act in La Vendée. At first, through want of experience in the method of warfare adopted by the peasantry, they were despised too much by the royalists; and the men, rhyming on Mayence, said that the new reinforcement was very much like fayence, a kind of inferior earthenware, because neither would stand the fire. But La Vendée was now girt in by national troops to the number of nearly two hundred and forty thousand men; and how a struggle against such gigantic forces could be maintained as long as it was, is one of those pages of history which is more wonderful than any romance. Thus the battles of Roche Deriguet, Martigne, Douay, Thouars, Torfou, Beaulieu, Montaigu, Saint Fulgent, and Moulin aux Chevres, were fought with more or less success by the Catholic army; but in the fatal battle of Chollet, where the Mayençais signalised themselves as if to revenge the contempt in which they had been previously held, it received a blow which threatened its immediate dissolution. M. de Lescure had been mortally wounded, though he lingered on for many days, and at one period hopes were entertained of his life. In an evil hour, a resolution was taken to pass the Loire, and to endeavour to find a refuge in Brittany, where the inhabitants were reported to be ready to take up arms. The deaths of M. de Bonchamp and M. d'Elbée accompanied or followed this disastrous passage. The army, together with the wives and families of the peasantry which composed it,

moved towards Laval; an army only in name, for the centre was entirely composed of women or children, the men being placed in the van or in the rear.

This body, as it marched along, sometimes occupied a space of four leagues. The victorious republican army hurried over the Loire, and came up with the Vendeans under Laval, doubtless believing that, in attacking a body of which the greater part was utterly unable to defend themselves, without food, without any knowledge of the country, and almost without generals, they were going to a massacre rather than to a combat. But in a victory to which Cressy or Agincourt sink into nothing, the unconquerable peasantry totally routed their enemies, and cut the Mayençais in pieces almost to a man. M. de la Rochejacquelein was elected general in place of D'Elbée, who had succeeded Cathelineau; and some of the more adventurous spirits were for marching immediately on Paris. Had this been done, it is impossible to say how far the subsequent history of Europe might not have been changed; but more prudent councils prevailed. Granville was attacked, but unsuccessfully; and the royalists then took up their position under Dol.

Duchenier, meanwhile, had been pursuing his negotiations in England, and had reason to hope that the ministry were more in earnest than he had thought them. He at length received his despatches, which were concealed in the barrel of a pistol; and with these he sailed in a British vessel for Jersey. Thence, by means of a smuggler's boat, he ran over in the night for the coast of Normandy, and landed at Granville.

As for Texier, he had quietly returned to Corday's house, where he found that Rose le Grand had already arrived. After some deliberation as to the safest course which she could pursue, it was determined that she should endeavour to reach the royalist army; and Dreux offered to be her escort. As his fidelity had been amply proved, and as Texier vowed that nothing should induce him to leave Paris till he could learn the fate of Madame Duchenier, and he mentally added till he could secure that of Santerre, the matter was so arranged. The exploit by which Rose had been rescued had of course caused no small sensation in Paris; but the driver of the

cabriolet had contrived so cleverly to elude his pursuers, by implicitly following the directions of Vertot, that no shadow of suspicion ever attached itself to the worthy gingerbread-seller or his family. As for M. Dommette, when he read the account in the *Moniteur*, he shrugged his shoulders, and contented himself with a quiet suspicion that two of his late guests must have had a hand in the business; but wisely calling to mind the proverb, that "two men can keep counsel, putting one away," he breathed not a syllable of it even to Madame Dommette till after the return of the Bourbons, and then M. Dommette's tale about the overturned tumbril became, in process of time, rather formidable to the frequenters of his coffee-room.

Texier spent his time at his cousin's house, partly in diligently reading the *Moniteur* for the purpose of satisfying himself as to Madame Duchenier, and partly in visiting the various prisons of the city in the hope of being able to discover her. When he had thus employed about three weeks, his relation, in requesting him to put up with an inferior room to that which he had previously occupied, informed him that he expected a kind of cousin of his from the country. "A wild sort of girl she is," he said, "and nothing less will satisfy her—Heaven save the mark—than coming up to Paris."

"An odd sort of taste too," said Texier.

"Why, so it is," said the tradesman; "but one can never tell what a woman's head will be set upon. *Pour le pain d'épice, je m'y connais; pour les femmes* ——" and he broke off into a whistle.

"But if I'm in your way ——" said Texier.

"Oh, my dear fellow, don't mention it," cried Corday; "I hope you will stay as long as ever you are able." And Texier accordingly did stay; and in a few days the country relation, whose name was Charlotte Corday, arrived at her cousin's house. She certainly warranted the character which he had given her. Day after day she begged to be taken to the Place de la Revolution, and seemed to take interest in nothing but in anecdotes of the existing horrors, and more particularly of the lives of the terrible triumvirate. Of Marat

especially she was accustomed to ask numberless questions. Her whole appearance was that of one possessed; her long black hair and black eyes were strangely contrasted with the death-like paleness of her face; she was tall and thin; and sometimes, when excited, spoke with an energy which rather discomposed the nerves of the gingerbread-factor.

Texier had by this time become fully persuaded that Marie Duchenier had either been removed from Paris, or had been made away with by underhand means. Corday assured him that the latter supposition was extremely unlikely; "for," said he, "it is never worth while now to conceal a murder. But are you sure that you have not left any one of the prisons without inquiries?"

"Well, I think not," replied Texier. "I have been to the Luxembourg, to begin with."

"Let me see," said Corday, pausing, with whitened arms, in his task of kneading. "Have you been to the Madelonettes?"

"Yes," said Texier.

"To La Mairie?"

"Yes."

"To La Plessis?"

"Yes."

"To the place—I don't know what they call it—in the Rue de Sèvres?"

"Well, I went there, but I could not see a list of the prisoners. However, they said there were no women there at all."

"Let me think. To the Carmelites?"

"Ay, I have been there."

"To Porte Libre?"

"Porte Libre," said Texier; "I never heard of that."

"You may know it by the name of La Bourbe; they sometimes call it so."

"No," said Texier, "I have not been there, and I don't know exactly where it is."

"Have you not?" asked Corday; "I advise you to go there, then; for I have heard that they have sent a good many there lately."

"But where is it?" asked Texier.

"Why," said his cousin, "it lies between the Observatory and the Rue d'Enfer. You go to the Rue d'Enfer, and any body will shew you where it is."

Texier accordingly departed on his mission; and upon arriving at the prison, which, notwithstanding its unpleasant name, was really in itself one of the best then used for the confinement of state-prisoners, requested, as he was accustomed, to see the list of those imprisoned there; and as the man seemed rather surly, he enforced the request by a two and a half franc piece. On receiving the paper, and running his eye down the alphabetical arrangement of names, he saw the "Duchenier, Marie," for a sight of which he had been so long labouring.

"I want to see that prisoner," he said, holding his finger under the name.

"Then you must want on," said the turnkey. "Pick and choose out of the rest, but that one, by express orders, is in solitary confinement."

"By whose express orders?" asked Texier.

"Ay," answered the man, "that's the question. But give me a couple of francs more, and you shall know."

"Tell me first," said Texier, somewhat suspicious that the man was laughing at him, "and then I'll pay."

"Oh, that's the time of day, is it?" said the turnkey. "Very well, it's by M. Danton's."

"There's the money," said Texier; and he walked away, well pleased to have acquired even thus much information.

CHAPTER XX.

WEARIED out by their long march, sadly thinned by their two hundred battles, fettered by the charge of the women and children, strangers in a strange land, the Catholic army, late on an autumnal evening, was quartered in the little town of Dol. As an attack was hourly expected from the pursuing, for it cannot be called the victorious, army, the wounded and the women were arranged under the walls—the long street being occupied by those capable of bearing arms. The place was not defensible: barriers were formed at the entrance of the town from the side of Dinan, and also from Pontorson; the patrols were vigilant and active; the officers, De la Rochejacquelein, De Donnissan, Duchenier, Stofflet, made up by increased labour for diminished numbers, and seemed —to use the common expression—to be every where.

Rose le Grand had, since her arrival in the army, attached herself to Madame de Lescure, who still followed it; and Duchenier had watched over her, as well as his necessary avocations would allow him, with all the careful affection of a brother. A wretched hovel, that lay immediately under the northern wall, had been appropriated to her, to Madame de Donnissan, and to Madame de Lescure; and thither, after seeing that all in his quarter was well arranged, Duchenier bent his way.

Rose was alone—the other ladies having retired for the night; and, starting up when the visitor knocked at the latched door, she held out her hand to him, and told him how glad she was to see him.

"Now," she said, "I shall know something of what is really intended; it is so sad to sit, hour after hour, in danger, and to know nothing of what is meant by the motions going on around us. Madame de Lescure is almost worn out with

sorrow and fatigue; I only wonder that her mind has not given way under what she has borne."

"What can I tell you, dear Rose?" asked he. "We seem to have no plan, no common bond of action. Cathelineau is gone—and Bonchamp is gone—and Lescure is gone—GOD rest their souls!—and De la Rochejacquelein, though as brave as a lion, has not confidence enough in his own judgment, and is too ready to be led by others. One thing seems certain; that we shall endeavour to cross the Loire again; and, I suppose, like the hunted stag, return to our own lair to die."

"They say," said Rose, "that there is great fear of an attack to-night. Is it so?"

"There is great fear, certainly; but whether great danger, is a different thing. I should not think there was."

"You have heard nothing from Paris?"

"Nothing. Texier remains there still, undoubtedly. I would give worlds to be there myself, though it would be almost the same thing as going to the guillotine; but I could never reconcile it to my conscience to leave the army in this state; and, after all, it would be useless for my poor Marie."

"You must not despair," said Rose, "while there is life. I may; for my father is gone: but while you know that Madame Duchenier is alive, you must trust in GOD to bring her back to you."

"No," replied Duchenier, "I have given up hoping. But I came to talk to you about yourself, Rose. What do you mean to do? The army cannot much longer hold together; and then, where do you think of going?"

"Madame de Lescure," she replied, "has asked me to live with her. You know that I have not a penny in the world that I can call my own; and but for her kindness, I should be an outcast indeed."

"This must not be," said Duchenier, taking a paper from his pocket. "Thanks to the kindness and prudence of my poor father, I have a considerable sum of money in the English funds—much more than ever I can want for myself, should I survive this war, which I do not expect. I have left it, in case Marie is taken away before me, to trustees, for

the use of the Catholic refugees in England; and you will find that you are not forgotten. This business I got through while I was in London. But, whatever happens to me, I must ask you to accept, as a little token of the affection which I know that my wife bears for you, this paper: it is a provision sufficient to prevent your ever being, as you say, an outcast, and from her you must accept it."

Rose hesitated; and the tears came into her eyes. "It is not pride," she said, "that makes me doubt about accepting your kindness; it is only the fear that there may be those among your relations who may have a right to expect what you are pressing on a stranger, who has no other claim on you than having shewed ordinary attention to Madame Duchenier when in distress."

"You will make me happy — you will make us both happy," replied Duchenier, "should poor Marie ever hear of it, by accepting this. I am sure you will."

And he pleaded his cause so earnestly, and yet so delicately, that Rose at length yielded.

"Now I will wish you good night," said Duchenier, rising; "you must have need of rest."

Just as he had taken Rose's hand, a confused hubbub rose in the principal street, and presently resolved itself into the cry, "*Aux armes!*"

"Never mind," he cried, "it may be a false alarm; if not, we will beat them off."

And he rushed to the scene of action. The peasantry, by torch-light, were ranging themselves at the barricades; twenty tambours, the whole musical force of the army, were beating incessantly in the different streets; the various chiefs were hastening to their respective quarters; and Duchenier hurried forward to the barrier erected on the Pontorson road.

"What is it, Stofflet?" he cried, as he met that officer.

"Some of our patrols have been driven in by the dragoons," answered Stofflet; "and they say we must look for a general attack. I'll tell you what, M. Duchenier, we must beat them off this time, for I hear they have sworn not to leave a single woman or child alive, if they get into the place."

"Where is the general?" asked Duchenier.

"Why, at the other barricade. But don't you go to him. They are nearest to this. And he is much better off."

"Very well," said Duchenier, "I will stay with you.—Ah, father, I am glad to see you," he continued, as an old man, the parish priest of one of the Poitevin villages, came up at the head of his parishioners, with a crucifix in his hand.

"And so am I to see you, my son," answered Father Pierre. "Have you any intelligence, M. Stofflet?"

"There's intelligence enough!" said Stofflet, as one sharp volley of musketry was heard to the south-east. "Run back, Fremille, to the townhall, and tell them to send us up more bags; I left the women hard at work over them." Just as he spoke, a light hand-cart rolled along the streets, bringing up a supply of sand-bags.

"That's all right," said Stofflet. "Now, my men, spread them out as much as you can: we haven't got too many, and you need not be afraid of making the loopholes pretty large."

"I had much rather be at them, major, than screwed up here like a bird in a cage," said an old peasant.

"I daresay you had," said Stofflet, "and so would I too; and so we shall be presently, if you look sharp." While he was speaking, all hands were engaged in piling the sacks; Father Pierre tucking his cassock under his left arm, and working as hard as anybody. In less than half an hour, what with overturned carts, ploughs, sand-bags, and two or three harrows set up on end, a very respectable barricade was completed.

"They're not near yet, Stofflet," said Duchenier. "Lend me your horse, good fellow," to one of the Vendean soldiers, "I'll just gallop down to the other gate, and see what De la Rochejacquelein is about;" and, suiting the action to the word, his horse's hoofs were in a moment clattering down the narrow street; the glare of eight or ten torches fell vividly on the group of men and officers who were labouring at that barrier.

"We'll give them such a reception," cried De la Rochejacquelein, "as shall take them some time to forget it. Have you any crows-feet, Duchenier?"

"No," said Duchenier. "Have they any cavalry to speak of?"

"Something like four hundred, one of our patrols tells me. You will find plenty at the townhall, for there was a sort of military dépôt there. But do as I have done; leave a clear sweep right and left of the barricade; for though our horse are none of the best, we may find them useful by and by."

"I'll ride back, and give orders," said Duchenier. "If we are hard pressed, can you help us?"

"That depends. If you are badly off, send up a couple of rockets together; and if you are in great danger three. I will do the same."

"Agreed," cried Duchenier; and he rode to the townhall. It was a large building, in the style of Louis XIV., well and substantially built. Every part of it, from the cellars to the upper story, was crammed with the families of the peasantry. In the great court thirty or forty women were hard at work in making the bags, the sacking being procured from a large manufactory, at no great distance down the street. It was with some difficulty that Duchenier made his way through the crowd to the room where the military stores had been kept; and having found the chest for which he was looking, he ordered it down to the Pontorson gate, and himself hurried thither first. The town, it should be said, had been regularly fortified, but the walls were in many places ruinous, and at the two entrances had been broken down for the space of thirty or forty yards; so that there could be no doubt of the two points which the enemy would attack. Sentinels were placed round the rest of the ramparts; and many of the women volunteered to mount guard round the town.

The night was very dark and still; and Stofflet more than once gave orders for perfect silence. "It's an odd thing, M. Duchenier," he said, "that we hear nothing of the rogues; I think they mean to take us by surprise. However, we'll be up to them."

In Duchenier's absence, Stofflet had made his preparations very well. The five or six small cannon, which were all that he could command, were posted right and left of the barricade,

so as to make it the curtain, to which they formed a kind of bastion; every loophole, left by the junction of the sand-bags, bristled with its own musket; the greater part of the men were drawn up right abreast, behind the works; and the cavalry were, for the present, left in the centre of the town, as no great dependence was placed on them. The different parishes, for the most part, kept together; and, in many instances, the parish priest was with his flock. By Stofflet's express command, the deepest silence was observed.

"I think I hear them," said he to Duchenier; "the villains are marching over the common, or we should have heard them long before.—Be ready, my men, when I give the word. You only do what I tell you, and no more, and you may be very sure that the thing will be soon over."

After about a couple of minutes' more suspense, a distant tramp was clearly heard, though the sound was muffled and dead; every soldier had his fore-finger on the trigger, and, as well as the uncertain light would allow, looked to his priming; Stofflet himself stood by one of the cannon, his match lighted; and Duchenier, with drawn sword, was by his side, having in his belt four or five pistols. Another minute, and the dead foot-fall on the grass was exchanged for the cranching noise of the battalions coming out on the hard road; and just as every one began to wonder at Stofflet's delay, he gave the word, "Fire!" The barricade blazed up in a moment in a kind of reticulation of light; the enemy, after firing stragglingly and to little effect, fell back twenty or thirty yards; and with the greatest rapidity possible, muskets were loaded or handed up from behind. Three times did the enemy assault the barricade, each time advancing more boldly, and struggling longer; the fourth, as if determined to carry all before them, in spite of the guns that were pointed at their very breasts, they succeeded in mounting the barrier, and in coming to blows with the Vendeans at the summit. It was in vain that Stofflet poured in fresh men on each assaulted point. The whole mass of the republican army pressed forward to support the stormers. And now from the other side of the town the shouts and firing gave proof that an equally vigorous assault was commencing in that direc-

tion. Duchenier was fighting hand to hand with two or three republican soldiers at the top of the barrier; Father Pierre had placed himself next to him, as if to be a conspicuous mark for the enemy; and as one after another of the Vendeans fell, he was loud in his exhortation to the survivors to avenge their brethren in this world, and to share their reward in the next. It was the only time, as an eye-witness assures us, that the priests were ever known, in the infidel language of the day, to fanaticise the Catholic army; and certain it is, that nothing short of enthusiasm, in the highest degree, could have enabled the peasantry to withstand for half an hour the no less skilful than desperate attacks of Canclaux. Even now he was practising that method of attack, in successive columns, which made the French arms for twenty years the terror of Europe; and rendered them victorious when, according to all the then rules of war, they ought to have been beaten. Column after column poured up against Stofflet's work, now reeking with blood and encumbered with corpses; till at length it seemed that resolution itself could maintain the post no longer. "I can't help it," said Stofflet, who at the moment found himself close to Duchenier; and turning round he gave orders that two rockets should be sent up. Before his directions could be obeyed, three ascended from De la Rochejacquelein's barricade; and the wily gamekeeper, knowing the extremity of his danger, shouted at the top of his voice, "*Courage, mes amis, les voilà qui s'enfuient!*" at the same time making a motion with his hand in the direction of Dinan. The Vendeans, knowing nothing of the preconcerted signal, and believing that the day was won on that side, exerted themselves with an amazing effort, and made their enemies recoil eight or ten paces. Duchenier, feeling that it must be now or never, gave the word, "*En avant la cavalerie;*" and galloping out on both sides, the Vendean cavalry took the enemy in the flank. The moment after, the whole *corps de reserve* poured out from the gate; and the republicans, already astonished at the resistance they had met, gave ground, made an ineffectual attempt to rally, and were then driven down the slope at the top of which Dol stands.

Stofflet, who, had he had the opportunity, might have become a great general, would not allow any pursuit; halted his men in good order on the brow of the hill, and requested Duchenier to lead a reinforcement to De la Rochejacquelein's side. Even before he could re-enter the town the bells of the great church had struck up a merry peal; a peal which struck more terror into the hearts of De la Rochejacquelein's assailants than would have been caused by a masqued battery opened upon them. Duchenier was but just in time to share in the triumphant sally on that side; and within half an hour after all had been given by Stofflet for lost, the bugles were recalling the Vendeans from their pursuit of the flying enemy.

Then all was joyful confusion; in every direction women might be seen embracing their husbands or fathers, eagerly inquiring if they had escaped quite unhurt, congratulating each other, and thanking GOD for the victory. And through two long lines of kneeling peasantry, the priests passed forth from the church of S. Geneviève, chanting the world-famous hymn, and surely it had never been chanted on a worthier occasion, "*Vexilla Regis prodeunt.*"

CHAPTER XXI.

Texier was now thoroughly puzzled how to act. On the one hand, he was exceedingly anxious to be with the Catholic army, of the successes and reverses of which intelligence reached Paris daily: he felt, also, that it might be months before Madame Duchenier was brought to her trial; and even supposing that event took place much sooner, he could not flatter himself that he should be able to be of any service to her either during its course or after its termination. On the other hand, he was manifestly not only exposing himself to danger, for which he cared as little as any man; but he might also be the means of bringing his cousin to the guillotine. All these reasons urged him to quit Paris; but still he lingered on. The violence of the Jacobins was now so extreme, that most persons thought the Reign of Terror must be approaching its end. Already the revolutionary party was beginning to separate itself into two factions: the one to which Danton belonged still retained the name of the Mountain, and professed some kind of moderation in its proceedings, and, above all things, acknowledged a Supreme Being; the other, usually denominated, from its principal leader, the Hebertists, was for proceeding to still greater lengths, and publicly professed no worship but that of reason. At this time the balance of power seemed to turn in favour of the latter. Danton, through some momentary impulse, married, and retired into the country, where it seemed as if his thirst for blood had altogether and for ever forsaken him.

Texier, in the hopes of some speedy change, continued therefore in the lodgings where we left him; and his attention became soon very strongly excited by the inmate whom the gingerbread-factor had thought proper to receive into

his house. Not only did her thoughts seem constantly occupied by the one subject of the misery of the revolution, and the guilt of its leaders, especially of Marat, but her conversation became wilder and more startling, and she not obscurely hinted that she considered herself raised up by Providence to work out a deliverance for France. It was in vain that Corday, who had as little enthusiasm in his composition as it was possible for a Frenchman to possess, ridiculed the idea, and gave several broad intimations that he was anxious to be freed from the presence of his visitor; it was in vain, also, that Texier urged, that whatever might be the crimes of the then leaders of the revolution, a private individual, except under very extraordinary circumstances, could not be authorised in avenging them. Charlotte Corday had evidently made up her mind to the performance of some deed that should effect the deliverance which she believed herself inspired to accomplish. Frequently she would be absent in the various courts of trial for hours and hours together; and come back in so excited a state as hardly to be in the possession of her senses. At length one morning, merely saying that she was about to go down to the Place de la Revolution, she asked Texier if he would accompany her.

"I tell you what, Charlotte," said Corday, "no man can ever say but that I am very glad to entertain every mother's son of my relations as long as they like to stay with me, although heaven knows I have enough of them; and if you behaved yourself like a reasonable woman, I would sooner bite out my tongue than say what I am going to say. But the truth must out. I really wish you would quietly go back to your home. Here are you talking of being called to do, I know not what, for the country, as if any thing you could do for it would bring about half so much good as if you stayed decently at home, and let your mother teach you to make puddings and pies. Come now, there's a good girl, do be persuaded; I or Texier here will go back with you, so that you may have nothing to fear; and, upon my honour, if you go on talking as you have been doing lately, you will bring us all to the guillotine in less time than it takes me to heat my oven."

"I am very much obliged to you, cousin Corday," replied his visitor, "for having taken me in so long; and I am quite ready to go home to-morrow if you wish it."

"Well," said the tradesman, "that's speaking like a sensible person; and I am sure, at any other time, you may come and stay with us a year, and welcome."

"May I?" said Charlotte Corday, with a peculiar expression of countenance.

"May you!" repeated her cousin, "you know you may, Charlotte; and I hope you will. There now; I must really go down stairs, or my gingerbread will not be worth an old song. Go out now, and see what you want to see for the last time; and then try to put all these things out of your head.—Cousin Texier, you will walk down with her, will you not?"

"With great pleasure," said Texier; and the two sallied forth together.

The thirst for human blood, which had three months before seemed on the decline in Paris, was now again at its full height; and as the two passed along westward, the various streets were either deserted, or were full of persons hurrying forward in the same direction.

"I wonder, cousin," said Texier, as, at his companion's request, they turned down towards the river, intending to walk along its bank—"I wonder that you can find so much in all these scenes to interest you. I have been long enough in Paris to get somewhat used to them; but when I was as much a stranger to it as you are, it used to make my blood run cold only to pass by one of their tribunals."

"Who told you, cousin Pierre," said Charlotte Corday, turning round sharply, and almost fiercely upon him,—"who told you that it does not make my blood run cold too?"

"Why," said Texier, smiling, though he by no means liked his companion's tone, "I should think if the thing was so excessively dreadful to you, you would not so often go to see it."

"You think so, do you?" she replied, and then walked on in silence for nearly five minutes. At the end of that time she slackened her pace, and said more gently, "May I

trust you with a secret, cousin Texier, on which much more than my life depends?"

"Well," said Texier, hesitating, "that depends on what sort of secret it is. If what you have to tell me would make me know of any evil you design to do before it is done, I had much rather not hear it."

"Evil!" cried Charlotte Corday; "but what, supposing it were a good thing that I designed to do?"

"Your ideas of good might differ from mine," answered Texier, briefly.

"Very well," said Charlotte, "I will keep my own counsel; only now that we are getting near the place, I advise you, as you value your life, not to be seen in my company. Good bye, and GOD bless you; I do not think that we shall meet any more in this world." And she stood still, and stretched out her hand to him.

"Charlotte, this must not be," he replied firmly, but kindly. "You have some desperate enterprise in your head, which, if you succeed in, will cost you your life; and which you have no right to attempt. I will not allow you to go further in it; I should be myself as guilty of your blood if I did."

"And how are you to hinder me?" asked his cousin very composedly. "If you try main force, Pierre, you will bring certain ruin on both of us; for I shall denounce you for what I know you to have done, and myself for what I intend to do."

Texier was puzzled how to act. His companion had worked herself up to such a pitch that there could be no doubt she would act as she threatened; and truth to say, the mind of the Vendean peasant had caught some small portion of the enthusiasm of his cousin.

"Well," he said at length, "you shall tell me this secret of yours; and I will give you my advice on the matter."

"My secret is very easily told. Marat will be this morning at the tribunal. I have a dagger about me. I hope to be able to get near him; and you may guess the rest."

Texier made a very long pause. "If ever there was a man," said he at length, "who deserved to die as a murderer, Marat is he; but I very much doubt, Charlotte, whe-

ther any thing can justify your thus taking his life, even if it be possible, and throwing away your own, which you are pretty sure to do."

"I have not the slightest doubt," returned Charlotte Corday, speaking gravely and slowly. "When the laws are in force, they can punish a murderer; when there are no laws at all, surely any one who has the power of avenging so much innocent blood, and of hindering the shedding of any more, not only has a right to do so, but in doing so does a great and innocent deed."

"I will not argue with you, Charlotte," said Texier; "but I will never believe that murder—for it is murder which you are intending to commit—can be right; and not being right, never can come to good. As to preventing his shedding more blood, leave that to GOD; He can order the matter without your committing sin."

"I know He can," returned his companion. "But what if He calls me to the work: would not that make it a holy deed?"

"Ah!" answered Texier. "But the question is, what reason have you for thinking that you are called to it?"

"Even this," said Charlotte Corday, "that I am willing to lay down my life to accomplish it. Could any thing else, except GOD's own call, give me courage to do that?"

"Charlotte, Charlotte!" said Texier, "you are deceiving yourself. If that were a good argument, then every heretic that was ever burnt was a martyr. Many things besides a call from GOD may make a man willing to throw away his life. I wish you would listen to me," he continued, more earnestly; "I wish you would be persuaded at least to put off your design till you have consulted some priest. Have you ever done so?"

"No," returned his cousin. "There was no need, in the first place, for I could not doubt that I had a call; and in the second, there is not a priest within twenty miles of us who has not taken the constitutional oath."

"Do it not, then, Charlotte. It is not of this man that I am thinking, it is of yourself and of your own soul. This will probably be the very last act of your life; as it is good

or bad, so will your state be in the next. It is surely worth while to pause, when the consequences may be so fearful."

"I have promised," said Charlotte Corday, "to leave Paris to-morrow; so I must act now or never. But even if I had not, I tell you plainly it could make no difference, and you can make no difference, for this is the day, and I am the person."

"If you will be obstinate," said Texier, "I at all events will go with you to the tribunal; the rest of your path you must tread alone."

"You had better not," replied his cousin; "any person seen with me will be noted. You are much more rash than I am. I am laying down my life for a glorious end; you are throwing yours away for nothing."

"I shall not expose myself," replied Texier, "to unnecessary danger; but I shall certainly go with you."

They were now almost at the Luxembourg, where the tribunal was then sitting. Arriving at the entrance, they found it thronged as usual with the lowest class of the population of Paris, and half an hour passed before they were able to make their way into the hall itself. The general appearance of that hall we have already described: one of the judges seated at the upper table was, as Charlotte Corday had said, Marat himself. For some time she appeared contented with remaining near the door, occasionally interchanging a word with Texier, and once or twice asking a question of some bystander. Meanwhile the trials proceeded as usual; and the so-called jury, with their accustomed rapidity, passed over their prisoners to the guardhouse, which they were only to leave for the guillotine.

Those who stood towards the upper end of the hall, and more especially the officials of the tribunal, observed, and more than once remarked it to each other, that a strange change had come over the usual behaviour of Marat. On ordinary occasions of business he was stern, gloomy, and reserved; never opening his mouth except to condemn, or to induce others to do so; and apparently taking very little interest in any part of a trial except its conclusion. Now his demeanour was quite altered. He was not only cheerful

and almost affable to those who stood around him, but he had once or twice put in a word in favour of a prisoner, and had actually attempted two or three jokes. Those acquainted with him thought that he must have been drinking; but Marat had not been drinking. The jurors once or twice communicated these remarks to each other, and could come to no satisfactory explanation of the difficulty.

Texier had paid no particular attention to the trials which had been going on since he entered the hall; but at last a prisoner was called whose name caused him to press forward with such violence, as to excite the attention of the by-standers. He could hardly believe his ears when one of the assessors said, "The next prisoner on the list is Marie Duchenier:" that one whom he had sought so long and so vainly to see; of whose fate, beyond the simple fact of her confinement, he had been able to learn nothing; and a wish for whose welfare had alone detained him in Paris;—that she should be brought forward at the precise moment when he accidentally and against his own wish was in the hall, seemed so remarkable a conjunction of circumstances, that even against his better judgment he was half-inclined to believe in the mission of Charlotte Corday. She too had heard the name; and pressing forward with as much eagerness, though with less violence than Texier, she soon stood in the very foremost rank of the spectators. The hall was so full, that the latter had considerably exceeded the bounds prescribed to them, and were now pressing up between the table of the judges and the side-walls of the hall. Marat, who had business which would require him to leave the tribunal early, was not president; and was now (probably weary of keeping one position) standing behind Couthon, who sat at the lowest end of the table on its right-hand side as you advanced towards it. To the right side of the hall Charlotte Corday, almost by imperceptible degrees, worked her way; and when Madame Duchenier was brought forward to the dock, was probably not more than six or seven yards from Marat. Texier watched her proceedings with the most intense interest: every time that she moved her arm he thought that the fatal blow was about to come; every time that she either advanced herself

or was pushed forward by those behind towards her intended victim, he could hardly restrain or conceal his emotion. She, in the mean time, was perfectly, to all outward appearance, composed and calm; and the only thing that was afterwards observed by the bystanders was, that she once or twice moved her right arm backwards and forwards within her cloak, as if to try whether it impeded its free action; and then proceeded to untie the strings which fastened it round her neck with her left hand, still, however, retaining them in it. But, before the examination commenced, Marat retired; and Charlotte Corday shortly after found means to leave the hall.

The usual questions were now proceeding.

"Your name?" asked the president.

"Marie Duchenier."

"Your maiden name?"

"De Beaurepaire."

"Your age?"

"Twenty."

One of the assessors now spoke. "Are you the wife of that Duchenier, who was a leader of the brigands down there in Poitou, and who is supposed to have made his escape from Nantes?"

"Is he supposed to have made his escape?" cried Marie. "Thank GOD for that!"

"I don't think," said the first speaker, somewhat nettled at having informed his prisoner of a fact which had till then been kept from her; "I don't think you will have much to thank GOD for, by the time we have done with you. However, that is as much as to say that you are his wife."

"And I think," said Couthon, in a very mild and beneficent voice, "that you are a daughter of that miserable reptile De Beaurepaire, who expiated his crimes the other day on the scaffold?"

"I am," replied Marie; who had been informed by her gaoler of her father's death.

"Were you not," inquired another of the judges, "taken prisoner at Cerisay by General Santerre, and carried by him to La Flêche, and then contrived to make your escape by some trick?"

"I was not taken prisoner by General Santerre," returned Marie; "but it is very true that he took me away from the officer who did take me prisoner there."

"Who was that?" interrupted Couthon.

"M. de Cailly," replied Marie. "General Santerre took me from him at Mirebeau, and carried me on to La Flèche, where I was rescued from him by my father and my husband."

"And then you returned to the brigands?" asked Couthon.

"Where else could I have returned," asked Marie, "than where my father and my husband chose to conduct me? Certainly I did go to the Vendean army."

"How long did you remain there?" inquired another judge.

"About six weeks," replied Madame Duchenier.

"And what made you leave it then?" said Couthon.

Marie hesitated.

"Come, madame," said Couthon, "the whole truth, if you please. What made you leave the brigands then?"

"It was thought," replied Marie, "that I should be safer at a distance from the army."

"And how came you to be taken at last?" said one of the assessors.

"Come, come, citizen," cried Couthon, "I think you are losing time. I can't stay here all day. To my mind, there's no doubt about the case."

"Examine her yourself, then," returned the assessor; "I am sure I don't want to ask questions."

"Is it not a fact, then," asked Couthon, "that during your residence in Paris you have maintained a correspondence with several disaffected persons, and more especially with some chiefs of the brigands?"

"I do not wish to deny it," said Marie.

"The case is clear, then," said Couthon. "How say you, gentlemen of the jury, is the prisoner guilty or ——"

At this moment, a cry rose in the hall, "Marat is slain!" "A woman has murdered him!"

To describe the confusion that ensued, is impossible. The jurors seemed more intent on providing for their own safety

than on any thing else; the judges and assessors seemed to imagine that there was some organised conspiracy to destroy them all. Those at the lower end of the hall did not at first understand what had taken place; as soon as they did, the cry arose among them to secure the murderer. It was done at once; and Texier, finding that his cousin was in the hands of the officers, and knowing that to render any assistance was beyond his power, resolved to hurry back to Corday's house, to give him notice of what had been done, that he might take measures for his own safety.

Issuing as quietly as he could from the hall, and hurrying along the least frequented streets, he arrived at the Barrière du Trône long before the least intimation of the great event had been received in that part of Paris. The worthy tradesman was thrown into a state of the greatest terror. He had nothing but visions of the officers of justice, of the revolutionary tribunals, and of the guillotine; and he conjured Texier, as a friend, to advise him what course to follow.

"If I were you, I would stay quietly just where I am; if you attempt to fly, you will be ruined. They can prove nothing against you; and your great safeguard will be, that you really had not the slightest idea what this unfortunate girl designed to do."

"But my wife and children," said Corday; "if any thing should happen to them?"

"I do not mean to say," replied Texier, "there is no danger in what I recommend; but there is less so than in any other way. In a couple of hours the officers will be here; and I do not think you could possibly escape them, if you fled this moment."

"Well," said the tradesman, "if it must be so, it must; and perhaps you are right. But you are not going to stay here?"

"No," replied Texier; "but on a very different account. If they took me, they would soon find out who I am; and it would go all the harder with you."

"But if they take you!" said Corday.

"If they do," replied Texier, "they will make nothing out of me that could implicate you, that you may rely upon."

And thus the two friends parted: Corday to prepare himself as best he might for the visit which he doubted not the officers of justice would pay to his house; and Texier to try if he could yet find some safe asylum in Paris, which he was determined not to leave till the fate of Marie Duchenier were finally sealed.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE Vendean army marched for the Loire. Its leaders felt that they had made a false move in forsaking their native ground. All that now remained was, if possible, to regain it.

It was a stormy evening. The republicans all day had been attacking Le Mans, which the Vendeans then held, on all sides; had driven in the peasantry from post to post; had, by sullen perseverance, overpowered the utmost efforts of despair; and now, men and officers seemed to come to the same conclusion of *Sauve qui peut*.

Rose had been seated, that long afternoon, in a small room in one of the obscure streets of the town. Madame de Lescure was still with her; and the two, during the various accounts of that hotly-contested day, kept up each other's courage, or shared each other's fears. Now, De la Roche-jacquelein's men had beaten off the blues on the left wing; now Stofflet had been driven in from his advanced post; now Forestier had rewon it;—and so, betwixt terror and gleams of hope, the day wore away.

"Surely the firing is coming nearer," cried Rose, as she stood by the casement, vainly endeavouring to distinguish any passer-by who might give information in the thickening obscurity.

"I have thought so the last ten minutes," said Victorine De Lescure; "but after all, it may be a mistake.—Hark! it seems getting further off!"

"They are pouring into the city!—Oh, madame, this is dreadful indeed!—Hark! there can be no mistake there!" And as she spoke, the sharp peal of musketry seemed to ring close under the very walls of the house.

"We must leave the place, Rose; we must trust ourselves with the fliers. We must not fall into their hands

here! better be shot down in the *mêlée*—a thousand times better. Quick, put on your bonnet, and come!"

As she spoke, a light quick step was heard on the staircase. Before there was time to express apprehension, the door opened, and Duchenier entered.

"All is lost!" he said; "you must follow me instantly."

"All lost!" said Madame de Lescure, half reproachfully; "and you alive?"

"Even so," he said, with the deepest dejection. "Had GOD so willed, would it had been otherwise!"

"Nay, nay, M. Duchenier," said Rose, kindly. "Life is not to be thrown away thus.—Let me help you, madame." And she threw a shawl over her fair companion's shoulders.

"Now then, come," cried Duchenier. And in a moment they were involved in the press of fugitives. It was a scene of the wildest confusion. Soldiers, women, and children, hurried on the road to Alençon. A few brave officers and peasants in the rear sacrificed themselves to give their brethren time for escape; except for them, the rout was universal.

"Now, Madame de Lescure,—now, Rose,—I must leave you," cried Duchenier, as soon as he had seen them through the gate. "My business is in the rear. We shall probably never meet again in this world! GOD bless you!—and farewell!"

As he spoke, a small party of dragoons poured down on the fugitives by a cross lane. In the confusion, Madame de Lescure was borne onwards and hurried forward with the foremost; Duchenier, with about twenty peasants and Rose, were cut off from the rest, and surrounded by double their own number of blues. Even then, Duchenier's presence of mind did not desert him. He rallied his men, faced about, repulsed the assailants, and retreated in good order down another lane, the continuation of that by which he had been attacked, towards a cottage some fifty yards distant.

"Into the cottage, Rose! We will defend you and ourselves to the last."

"No, no; let me remain outside,—I shall fall into their hands alive, if you make me go in!"

"You must, Rose; we may beat them off."

Almost forcing her into the cottage, he found that the inhabitants had, probably on that evening, deserted it. Calling in five or six of his men, he placed them by the only window the tenement could boast—for it was a mere hovel of one room—bade them barricade it, and hold it out to the last. Then, forming his remaining men round the door, he twice or thrice repulsed the most strenuous efforts of the assailants.

The window was soon barricaded after a sort, leaving loopholes for the muskets of the defenders. "Look, mademoiselle! look!" cried one of the men; "here is a bin, or something of that sort, by the fireplace in the floor; get into it, and they may not find you out."

Rose raised the lid by its ring, and looked in. It seemed to have been used for the reception of oats, of which a very thin sprinkling remained at the bottom.

"Ay, that will do! that will do!" said the man. "Get in! get in! I will shut down the lid."

He did so; and, in another second, after pouring in one furious discharge of musketry, the dragoons dismounted, and fought their way, sword in hand, to the door. The Vendeans were driven in; the door was forced back on the republicans, and fastened with a rude staple of wood.

"Will you surrender?" shouted a voice from outside.

"On what terms?" asked Duchenier.

"Unconditionally."

"No. We are resolved to sell our lives as dearly as we can.—Where's the lady?" he asked of those about him.

"Safe enough! safe enough!" answered the man who had assisted her in concealing herself.

"That's well," said Charles. As he spoke, there was a clatter among the tiles overhead; three or four of the republicans were mounting there, and had begun to unroof the building. With the deadliest aim they poured in their fire from above; while that of the Vendeans was almost fruitless. One after one fell; and at length Duchenier himself was struck in the right shoulder, and the ball passed out under the blade.

There were but five or six of his men unhurt. Arbalest, who had been his faithful attendant from the time he had

rejoined the army, ran up to him. "Are you much hurt, monsieur?"

"Mortally, I believe," said Duchenier. "Leave me alone: give them a lesson what it is to make men desperate."

"More tiles off! more tiles off!" said some one on the roof.

"I should know that voice," said Duchenier, faintly.

"So should I, monsieur. By S. Nicholas! it is that villain La Force."

"You are right," said the wounded leader. "Don't let him escape, if you can."

"No, monsieur, that I ——" began Arbalest; and at the same moment was stretched a corpse at his master's feet.

"Now you may burst in the door," said La Force; "I don't think there are three left."

One vigorous push—a loud crash—one more volley—and the dragoons fell in, sword in hand, over the prostrate bodies of the Vendeans. The one or two who remained were disarmed.

"Keep them fast," shouted La Force. "We'll have them shot presently. But there was a woman in here, I'll swear. Have out the bodies—she must be hidden among them."

The dead and wounded, despite the groans of the latter, were rudely drawn out, and heaped together in front; but Rose, it is very clear from what we have said, was to be found nowhere.

"She cannot have escaped," cried one of the men.

"Not she," said La Force, with an oath. "Stop! I know what we will do.—Hallo! you fellow!" to one of the prisoners; "you must know where the lady is: if you will tell me, you shall have your life; if not, I will have you shot on the spot."

"So you may," said the man; "I shall not say."

"Very well," cried La Force; "let him run for his life, and hit him as he goes—it is good practice. Leave go of him."

"I shall not stir an inch," said the Vendean; "I did not come here to make myself a mark for you."

"That's right, Petitot," said Duchenier.

"You here?" cried La Force, bending over the wounded man.

"Ay, La Force; your villany has served your turn in this world."

"Not exactly," said Petitot, who finding himself at liberty, drew his one loaded pistol, and shot the traitor through the chest.

"The scoundrel has done for me," said La Force, staggering to the bench in front of the cottage; and, even as he spoke, five or six shots passed through the body of the brave Vendean soldier, and stretched him a corpse on the ground.

"I am going very fast," gasped La Force, "but I should be sorry to go before that woman is found.—You, sirrah!" to the remaining prisoner, "I will give you your life if you tell me where she is."

"I cannot if I would," returned the man; "I have not seen her."

"Let him go," said La Force, "and shoot him down."

The peasant, on being released, sprang off like a deer for his life. A shot from one of the republicans brought him down on his knee; he struggled up again—a second stretched him on the ground in the convulsions of death.

"What's that ring there?" said one of the men in the cottage. "Pull it up, Jaques.—Hallo! ma'amselle!—We have her, sergeant; we have her." And Rose was dragged out in front of the cottage.

"He does not understand," said one of the men; for La Force's eyes were shut, and he seemed insensible.

"Sergeant la Force," shouted another in his ear, "we have the woman."

La Force opened his eyes, and, by a great effort, looked up. "Let her be shot," he said; and with the words of murder on his lips, his spirit went to its dark and terrible account.

"Tie her to the bench," said her captor; "we'll aim at her from fifty yards."

"If you have one human feeling," said Duchenier, faintly, "you will not murder a woman in cold blood. I promise you more ransom for her than you could venture to hope."

"Pshaw!" cried one of them, "what do we care for ransom? And who's to trust you? you're dying yourself.—Come, Jaques."

"M. Duchenier," said Rose, "don't ask for my life. There are worse things than death," she added, in a low voice; "and if these men keep me till their thirst for blood is over,—it is too terrible to think of."

"Where's a bit of rope?" said one of the men.

"Don't tie me," pleaded Rose; "let me kneel down. I will not move."

"Hang me!" said Jaques, "but you have some spirit.—I'll tell you what, comrades, she shall give the sign herself; she deserves fair play."

"So she shall! so she shall! Lift up your right hand when you are ready."

Rose looked on Duchenier, saw that he was insensible, knelt down, crossed her hands on her breast, and prayed for about two minutes. The men stood some twenty yards off, with their guns to their shoulders—one or two having the humanity to reserve their fire. She raised her hand, as directed; ten or twelve reports rang through the air, and she fell forward.

"Quite dead," cried Jaques, coming up. "So is the officer, or dying. Well, that's a good job."

CHAPTER XXIII.

We must go back a little in our tale. Danton, after the committal of Madame Duchenier to La Bourbe, had no ceased to persecute her with one or two visits; and in the mean time he found it easy to procrastinate her trial from day to day, in the hope of at last bending her to his will. But, as we have seen, his views for the present altered; he married and retired into the country, and soon utterly forgot that such a person as his victim had existed. In due course of time the gaoler, receiving no farther intimation from Danton as to the course to be pursued with respect to Marie, allowed her turn for trial to come on without further interference; and the result, as we have seen, was that her sentence was not yet pronounced when Charlotte Corday delivered the world from the tyranny of Marat.

In prison, then, Marie Duchenier lingered during the whole of that winter, ignorant whether she was to consider herself as sentenced, and, if she were, when that sentence would be carried into execution.

In the mean time, the friends of Danton saw with consternation that his absence in the country was exposing his party to ruin, and they despatched letter after letter urging his return to Paris. Week after week he delayed; and in the mean time Robespierre was strengthening his party, making his plans, and preparing himself for the great blow he intended to strike.

At length, in the spring, Danton came up to Paris, and his faction immediately regained courage, and seemed to recover strength. In the Club des Cordeliers more especially that party reigned almost triumphant, and Danton's influence was by many of the wisest observers thought superior to that of his rival. Both were agreed on one point—on the necessity

of crushing the more blasphemous section of the Jacobites; those, namely, who utterly despised the notion of any Supreme Being, and who were represented by Hébert and Chaumette, and the infamous pages of the Père du Chene. The downfall of these men was accomplished; and then to gain the highest point of all, it needed only that either Danton or Robespierre should crush his rival.

It was a fine day towards the end of March, and Marie Duchenier, now utterly hopeless of human succour, and deriving consolation from one fact only, that her husband had survived his imprisonment, was seated alone in the little room which, as the prison happened to be very empty, had been appropriated to her use. Her apartment was situated near the top of the prison, and from its little window the eye commanded a prospect of the Parc de Vincennes, of the confluence of the Seine and the Marne, of the pretty little village Montrouil, and even in some measure of the more distant forest of Bondy. Of the motions of the Catholic army, of the fate of its leaders, and of its own final dispersion, she knew nothing, except indeed that some obscure intimations of the last-mentioned event had reached her on the authority of her gaoler. It was not that Duchenier, who had established a complete system of communication with Texier, had failed to write again and again; but not a single letter was allowed to be delivered to the prisoners, and Texier's utmost vigilance could not find the means of overcoming the difficulty.

Thus, then, Marie sat alone, and watched the gradual brightening up of the scene before her, as the sun, now beginning to exert some power, got round to the south. It was so unusual a thing for her to receive any visit except at meal-times, that she was much astonished towards eleven o'clock to hear steps on the staircase which led to her apartment; and her wonder was presently turned into terror when the door opened, and the gaoler entering announced Danton. Having executed that errand, he retired at once; and the terrible rival of Robespierre, whose external appearance was somewhat improved since the time that we last beheld him, but whose mind remained unaltered, was left alone with Marie.

"It is quite by chance, Madame Duchenier," said he,

"that I have found you out again; they told me that you had been condemned; and I knew my duty to my country too well to think of interfering in such a case."

"I have been condemned," replied Marie; "and why the tribunal suffers me to linger on here I know not. One thing I am sure, that it is not in mercy."

"We may as well understand each other, fair Marie," said Danton, "because it will save trouble in the end. This is too good a chance to be lost. When I saw you last, I told you, that if you liked to be mine, you might save your father and your husband; you rejected my conditions, and I left you to your fate. Now I will make no more conditions about the matter; you shall be mine, whether you like it or not."

"I have only to say," said Marie, "what I said before, that however much GOD may sometimes allow the wicked to prosper, such monstrous villany as this—villany even worse now than it was before, because they tell me that you have a wife—He never will permit to succeed; and I do not believe, whatever injustice may be practised by the tribunals, that they are yet fallen so low as that I need to dread any violence here."

"Indeed!" said Danton; "we shall see. But this I tell you, that your fate is quite in my hands. Ask the gaoler here, if, to serve me, he would not allow any infraction of discipline; he knows too well his duty to give any answer but one."

"Still," said Marie, "till I have renounced all trust in GOD, I cannot fear you; and I look on you at this moment with no other feeling than that of hatred and contempt."

"Is it so?" said Danton, rising from the chair which he had hitherto been occupying, and approaching the window by which Marie was still sitting as she had been at his entrance—"is it so? I will find the means of making you tell another story."

In spite of what she had just said, it cannot be denied that Marie turned pale as she heard the threat; but almost at the same moment steps were again heard ascending the staircase.

"How is this?" said Danton, angrily, as the door opened. "I gave orders that I should on no account be disturbed."

"You did so, monsieur," replied the gaoler; "but the fact is ——" and he hesitated.

"The fact is what, fellow?" demanded Danton, working himself up into a fury.

"Why, to speak the truth, monsieur," returned the other, "they say that Monsieur Robespierre intends to move your impeachment in the Convention to-day, and your friends think that you ought not to be loitering here."

"Robespierre move my impeachment!" cried or rather howled Danton; "move my impeachment, the miserable villain!—me, to whom he owes every thing that he has or that he has done! I will teach him a different lesson. In an hour I will be at Convention myself, and he shall pay most dearly for what he has said."

"Monsieur," said the gaoler, "an hour hence would be too late; you must go at once, if your going is to do any good. You know I wish you well so far as I dare, but there is a point beyond which I cannot go."

The man's unaffected terror convinced Danton more than any thing else, that his fate hung in the scale. "As it has come as far as that," he said, "why, then it is time for me to be going myself. But never mind, fair lady; I shall see you again this afternoon, depend upon it." And he hurried down stairs.

"Ah, he may think so," said the gaoler; "but it is all up with him, I can tell him. I am not quite so much in his power as he thinks. But there is a man below who has got an order to see you; shall I shew him up?"

"What is his name?" asked Marie, eagerly.

"Texier," replied the other.

"Oh, shew him up, shew him up at once," returned Marie. "But stay one moment; then you do not think that there is any fear of M. Danton returning?"

"Not I," replied the man; and, after locking the door, he went down stairs.

In a few moments Texier was ushered into the apartment, scarcely less to his own joy than to that of her for whom he had so long been seeking. After the few first hurried questions, with which she almost overwhelmed him, he gave her

the letters with which he had been entrusted by her husband. After waiting a few moments, while she was rather devouring than reading, the honest peasant said: "If you have any thing to ask me, or to tell me, madame, you had better do so now, for they will not have me stay here long."

"He says he has been wounded," said Marie; "tell me about that first."

Texier related all that he knew. "Had it not been for that, madame, come life, come death, he would have been in Paris long before now."

By a few rapid questions, Marie obtained some knowledge of the state of affairs as connected with the royalist army. "Nothing now," Texier said, "detained M. Duchenier in Poitou, but his own health; and when that would permit him, he would lose no time in endeavouring, at whatever risk, to have one interview with Marie." She, for her part, explained rather by hints than in words, the insults which she had received from Danton; and the danger to which, if he were not first cut off, she was exposed from him. She had scarcely finished her account, when the gaoler entered, and informed Texier, but not uncivilly, that he could not be allowed to remain longer in the prison.

"I will come directly, monsieur," said Texier; "but would you first allow me to say one thing more to this lady in private?"

"Be quick about it, then," returned the gaoler. "I will wait outside the door."

"Madame," said Texier, "I believe, from what I have heard, that Danton is really in great danger. But if any thing happens to him, they will not let you hear it here. You see that church-tower, just beyond the river there. If you will look out of this window at eight to-night, there shall be a light in the belfry, if he has fallen: if not, all will be perfectly dull."

"Thank you, thank you, good Texier," replied Marie. "I will not fail to look out. You will tell my husband how you have found me. They will not let me have pen and ink, so that I cannot write. But say, that sooner than that he should run any unnecessary risk by coming to Paris, I had

far rather he remained where he is, and waited the opportunity of doing some good in Poitou. To me, I fear, he can do none; and to see me suffer, would only add to his sufferings."

Texier lost no time in repairing to the tribunal. On reaching the Luxembourg, the unusual concourse of people gave sure proof that something of more than common interest was going on. Just as he was about to mount the steps which led into the great hall, he was met by Dreux; that personage having so little to do with his time, that he was usually to be found in all places of public interest.

"Come in, come in," he said, in an eager but at the same time a carefully modulated voice. "It is capital fun; old Danton is standing at bay; and if ever you wished to see a human being look like a tiger, now is your time."

The invitation, however, was more easily given than accepted; for the immense crowd that blocked up every passage to the Luxembourg rendered it almost impossible to advance. At length, by violent efforts, they made good their entrance; and Texier then saw that Danton was indeed reduced to the condition to which he had so often brought others. He, however, with his companions in misfortune, the moderate part of the Jacobin faction, General Westermann, Camille Desmoulins, Fabre d'Eglantine, and others, defended themselves with far more talent than they had hitherto been supposed to possess. The same angry mob which had clamoured for the destruction of the Girondists, now angrily demanded theirs; but the Convention gave signs of a spirit which it had not then possessed. Tallien, the president, threw all his influence in favour of the accused; and the deputation sent in by the mob without, to tell the Convention that death was the order of the day, received the firm and decided answer, that the statement was false — justice and not death being so. Robespierre evinced terrible agitation; it was a struggle for life and death between him and Danton, and he knew it to be so. He passed rapidly from one part of the hall to another, suggesting, advising, and entreating; but in spite of all his endeavours, for three or four hours, the scale appeared to turn in favour of his rival. At the end of

that time, Texier, who, however deep might be the interest which, for Madame Duchenier's sake, he took in the event, was thoroughly bewildered with the noise, the heat, and the excitement, left the hall with Dreux, and walked up and down the Rue S. Honoré in company with him. An hour thus passed, when the street, which had previously been nearly deserted, was almost suddenly filled with more than its usual number of citizens, and Dreux exclaimed, "Surely the trial must be over; let us ask;" and he put the question accordingly to a man who happened to pass them.

"Oh, yes," said the person interrogated, "Danton is condemned;" and without further note or comment he passed on. Indeed, the demeanour of the various passengers seemed rather that of men who had hardly courage to carry out the resolution of the Convention, than of those who rejoiced in the downfall of a dangerous tyrant.

"I wonder, after all," said Dreux, "whether they will carry out the sentence. You may depend upon it, my good friend, that Robespierre is cutting away the ground from under his own feet, until he will have none left to stand upon."

The crowd now became very great, and it was evident that an expectation prevailed of seeing the prisoners pass along to their execution. "We may as well wait for that," said Dreux; "it will be something to talk of hereafter."

The two accordingly stood back at the corner of one of the streets that led into the Rue S. Honoré; and in a few minutes the tumbril appeared. The prisoners, in spite of all the affected bravado of their demeanour, were evidently terrified at their approaching fate, with the single exception of Danton. He was sitting next to Fabre d'Eglantine, the poet; when the latter gave so deep a groan, that even amidst the confusion of the crowd it was audible to the nearest bystanders.

"What's the matter, my good friend?" said Danton cheerfully. But D'Eglantine gave no answer.

"Come," said Danton again, "cheer up; we are only all taking to your trade."

"*Comment donc?*" asked Fabre d'Eglantine listlessly.

"*Comment?*" repeated Danton. "*Nous allons faire des vers,*" with which wretched witticism the tumbril moved on, and the prisoners passed away from Texier's sight. He, it may be easily conceived, had no desire to follow them; he hurried back to La Bourbe, hoping to obtain a second interview with Madame Duchenier, and to acquaint her with the death of her persecutor; but failing in that, he proceeded to the church of S. André, to make preparations for thence exhibiting the concerted sign of Danton's fall.

CHAPTER XXIV.

It was a sultry evening towards the end of July. The sun wanted about an hour to his setting, and his cloudless rays fell vividly on the patched casements of a village inn, in the little parlour of which Charles Duchenier was seated. The table was spread with respectable preparations for an evening meal; and Duchenier himself, who had nearly recovered his usual strength, looked much the same as when we first introduced him to our readers, except that the anxiety of the last twelve months had apparently added six or seven years to his age. However, he appeared to be applying himself in earnest to the viands set before him; and, to judge by the attention which the hostler was bestowing on a fine horse, at the stable-door, he was not so much occupied by his own concerns as to neglect the faithful companion of his journey. By the time he had concluded his meal, the sun was concealed behind a group of trees, which stood immediately before the village inn, and Duchenier walked forth into the little village street to enjoy the coolness of the evening, and, perhaps, the more freely to think over his position and his designs.

Whoever has seen the little village of La Fosse will remember that, on the S. Lo road, about half a mile to the east of its church, there rises a sufficiently steep hill, from the top of which the traveller may obtain his first view of the fair cathedral of Coutances. It happened that Duchenier, looking in that direction, beheld a traveller rapidly descending the brow of this hill, whose appearance caused him to shade his eyes with his hand, and to look attentively at him.

"He knew I was coming by this road," said Duchenier,

to himself, "but what can have brought him here? and that certainly is he, or I never was so much mistaken in my life."

A few minutes more served to place Texier by his master's side.

"Why, Pierre," cried Duchenier, "what, in the name of wonder, brings you here?"

"Thank GOD, monsieur, that I have found you," answered Texier. "If you do not make the utmost haste forward, you will be too late, after all."

"How do you mean, too late?" said Duchenier, in great agitation; "has any thing new happened?"

"They have fixed to-morrow for her execution, monsieur. I have spoken to her once again, and now she wishes very much to see you."

Duchenier seemed quite overwhelmed with the intelligence. "It is impossible," he said, at length.

"No, monsieur," replied Texier, "it is possible, by hard riding. If you will go into the house, and settle your account, I will get your horse ready. Mine only came from S. Lo, and therefore can start at once."

Duchenier, though extremely anxious to ask more questions, followed the advice of his servant. The account was quickly settled, the bed which had been bespoken countermanded, and within ten minutes from Texier's first appearance on the hill, Duchenier and he were urging forward their horses towards S. Lo.

"Now tell me all you know, Texier," said his master, as soon as they were clear of the little village street.

"Yesterday morning," answered Texier, "a boy brought down a message to me, from La Bourbe, that Madame Duchenier wished to speak to me, and that I should be allowed to see her. I went at once; and then I found that they had told her that to-morrow was to be the day, and that there would be no second trial. I told her that you were on your way to Paris; and that, if I possibly could do it, I would see you and hurry you forward; and she seemed satisfied. Then I went down to the Barrière du Trône, to leave word in case you should come there before I could get back; and

then I hired the best horse I could get, and came on at once."

"And there is no hope?" said Duchenier, mournfully.

"There might be hope, monsieur," replied Texier, "if there were but one leader to head the rabble against Robespierre. They always feared him, but now they hate him more than they fear him. The windows in the Rue S. Honoré were closed when the tumbril passed by; so they removed the guillotine to the Barrière du Trône, just opposite my cousin's house, thinking that the people in the fauxbourgs might take some interest in it. But even they are sickened with so much blood. Once or twice there have been attempts to rescue the prisoners; and wiser men than I, have said every day for the past week, that that would be the last time the tumbril would pass by."

"Let us only be there, Texier; let us only be there," and Duchenier seemed incapable of any other thought.

In about an hour, the two travellers had reached S. Lo, and there, after some little delay, procuring fresh and strong horses, they rode forward again to Bayeux. The moon was looking down peacefully on the exquisite spires of its cathedral, as the horses clattered through its narrow streets; and, without waiting to give them refreshment, they were soon clear of the city, and spurring through the desolate tract of country that lies eastward of it. The cool breeze refreshed both horses and riders as it sprang up about midnight; the moon sunk lower and lower; marshy vapours rose thicker and whiter as the night advanced; and when the travellers, for a moment, drew rein on the steep hill above Lisieux, the great bell of its distant clock tolled two.

In that town, at the rambling Ecu d'Or, they were forced to alight; the waiter was with great difficulty aroused; and not even their assertion that they were riding post for Paris on business connected with the government, as indeed it certainly was, could procure fresh horses without a considerable waste of time. Procured, however, they were at last; and the summer morning broke in all its beauty on their road to Evreux. Its ancient cathedral stood out gloriously against the morning sky, as Duchenier and Texier rode in at the

archway of the Hôtel d'Angleterre, then called the Hôtel National, and demanded fresh horses and some necessary refreshment. A quarter of an hour sufficed to procure the one and to complete the other; and with brighter hopes of obtaining his object than he had yet indulged, Charles Duchenier again pushed forward for Mantes. But the heat of the weather delayed them beyond their expectations, so that it was fully eleven o'clock before they reached the hotel that stands, or did stand, if the railroad has not altered it, on the southern side of the great church. Now on the high road to Paris, better horses were procured, and with greater speed; so that, although the sultriness of the day increased, it was not without great hope that the two travellers struck southward.

"Courage, monsieur," said Texier, answering what he knew must be his master's thoughts, "my life for it, we shall be in time. Even if we cannot change at S. Germain en Laye, these horses can take us into Paris."

"But only three hours more," said Duchenier.

"Nay, monsieur, more than that," said Texier; "the procession does not leave the Luxembourg till three, and it does not get down to the Barrière du Trône till after four."

"We are on the wrong side of Paris," said Charles.

"Ay, monsieur," said Texier, "but we shall do it for all that. That landlord knew what he was about," he added, more cheerfully; "he could not have chosen better horses than these."

So they rode forward; till, at about one o'clock in the afternoon, they reached Neuilly-sur-Seine.

"Now," said Duchenier, "we have but to push on straight to the Luxembourg; and we must be in time."

"Under favour," said Texier, "if you will take my advice, monsieur, you will not do so."

"Why?" cried his master. "What would you have me do?"

"Ride at once to the Barrière du Trône," replied Texier. "My cousin Corday knows all that is going forward; and it may be as well."

"What *can* be going forward?" asked Charles, hastily.

"No; I will go straight on." At that moment the fate of Marie hung by a thread.

"Monsieur," cried Texier, earnestly, "do for once be persuaded. You know not how strong the feeling against this man is. I have a kind of presentiment that his downfall is very near. If you go along to the tribunal, you will hear nothing, you will see nothing, that can enable you to take advantage of circumstances; if you go to the Barrière, you may."

"But how?" inquired Duchenier.

"By Montmartre, monsieur, and Père la Chaise."

Charles, after hesitating a moment, merely said, "Very well;" and the two were speedily riding round through the northern environs of Paris.

Duchenier was too much immersed in his own meditations, and, moreover, had had too little recent acquaintance with the metropolis, to notice any thing remarkable in the behaviour of the inhabitants of the fauxbourgs through which they passed. But Texier observed a great change even during the few hours he had been absent; and the grouping of the inhabitants, the spirit of discontent, the ill-suppressed murmurs, the occasional curses on the bloodthirstiness of the Jacobins, recalled to his memory the impression he had received when going with De Beaurepaire to the S. Lazare, on the evening preceding the ruin of the Girondists. More especially, it seemed to him that in the Barrière des Amandiers, and thence onward to that Du Trône, and in the Fauxbourg S. Antoine, the proverbially insubordinate population were on the very eve of an outbreak. On reaching the Barrière du Trône itself, the houses which faced the street by which the tumbril must pass, were all closed; and it seemed that the excitement which Robespierre had hoped to produce by shifting the scene of the executions had utterly failed in its purpose.

"This way, monsieur, this way," cried Texier, as they turned from the Avenue des Ormes into the Place du Trône. "To the left—to the left."

A few moments more brought them up to Corday's house. Leaping from his horse, Texier opened the door without cere-

mony; and, followed by his companion, entered the passage which led to the staircase. Voices were heard loud in talk in the parlour, the door of which stood open.

"I tell you it may be done.—I tell you it may be done easily," cried a speaker, whom Texier at once recognised to be Dreux; and whose voice sounded familiar even to Duchenier. "They are determined to try it; and a more desperate set I never saw."

"But Robespierre," said Corday, fearfully.

"Robespierre, my dear fellow!" cried Dreux, who seemed to have taken as much wine as he could carry without the disarrangement of his faculties; "Robespierre!—Robespierre's not worth *that!*"—and he snapped his fingers. "No! no! You must and shall come with us."

"What is it?" said Texier, suddenly entering the room.

Corday and Dreux started up; and the latter, recognising Duchenier, cried, "Ah, monsieur! you are just in time! Madame has just been condemned; they have sent some eighty more to the guillotine to-day; and the good men of the Fauxbourg S. Antoine say they shall never reach it. Will you join us?"

"To the death!" cried Duchenier. "When and where?"

"The plan is, to make a general attack upon them when they get to the Fontaine de l'Eléphant.—Texier, you know not what a change the last day has wrought. I am confident of success."

"Have with you! have with you! When?"

"They will be there an hour hence; but we must be off at once. They have some good men among them.—Now, Corday, you will join us?"

"Yes.—Will monsieur take any thing?"

"A glass of wine; nothing else."

"And, good cousin, bring me one, too," cried Texier.

The wine was tossed off; and the companions sallied out. "I shall say, monsieur, that you have seen service," cried Dreux; "they will not think of asking where. And it would make no great difference if they did; they would join with the devil himself against Robespierre."

"Who would not?" said Texier.

"Look, all the shops are closed," proceeded Dreux, as they hastened up the Fauxbourg S. Antoine.

"Has that been long done?" inquired Duchenier.

"Only the last week. It means a great deal. They sent a commissioner to discover who set the example; but it was no use."

Little more was spoken till they reached the Fontaine de l'Eléphant; and then Dreux called Duchenier's attention to the locality. "There are ten streets, monsieur, you see, which open into the *Place*. They are up and doing in each of them. Which will you choose?"

"I will be with you."

"You cannot do better. Mine is the Rue de Charenton. The onset is to be made as soon as the first car passes that corner. Come with me."

Dreux led the way to the street he had mentioned. To a casual observer it might only have seemed very full, when its usual character was taken into consideration; but, in the nods of intelligence which Dreux interchanged with several who were loiterers in it, in the air of determination which most of the bystanders displayed, and in the very curious weapons which many of them bore, Duchenier saw something deeper than this. They approached a group of persons who were conversing together; and Dreux said, "Gentlemen, allow me to introduce to you Monsieur—Monsieur Thévenot —who has served with reputation in La Vendée."

"Very glad to see you, monsieur," said a substantial tradesman, taking off his hat; which salutation Duchenier returned. "You approve, then, monsieur, of this plan?"

"So far as I have had the opportunity of judging, monsieur, I approve it highly. You could not, in my opinion, have made choice of a better locality."

"They may beat us to-day, monsieur; but they will not carry this wholesale butchery on for long. We are sick of it, monsieur; it is enough to tarnish all the glory of the Republic. And I think," he added with a smile, "down from the days of the League till now, we lads of the Fauxbourg S. Antoine have had things much our own way. You have doubtless heard what is to be the signal?"

In conversation like this, the time passed on; till, when the clock of the Hospice des Quinze Vingt struck three, the citizen, whom we have mentioned, observed: "I think we may as well be drawing a little nearer to the top of the street. Now remember, gentlemen, we don't want to shed any blood, if we can help it. All we have to do is to set the prisoners free. And not a soul stir till I give the word. The more haste the worse speed."

We must shift the scene; but not very far. At that moment the line of carts, which bore the victims of the day, was moving slowly along the Rue S. Antoine. Marie was in the second. She had given up the hope of again seeing him whom she loved best on earth; she had been denied pen and paper, so as to be unable to leave any note for him, to tell him of her unchanging and unchangeable love, and of her firm trust in GOD that all was ordered for the best. She wore, as did most of the female prisoners, plain mourning; her hair was arranged *à la guillotine;* and all her certainty that the arrival of her husband was not to be expected, could not hinder her now and then from casting her eyes around her, for the purpose of discovering, in the crowd, any one who might resemble him.

"My poor child," said a lady who sat by her, and to whom she had that morning related her sad history, "this is a grievous disappointment to you."

"I did think," replied Marie, her eyes filling with tears as she spoke, "that I should have seen him again. After all, it matters not; we shall soon meet where we cannot be separated any more."

"I often think," said her companion, "how unspeakably little and trifling our present sorrows must seem to those who have gone before us. The pain is so very short; the joy so very long."

"Ay, madame, if we could see it so," observed a gentleman who sat opposite.

"It is so, monsieur, whether we see it so or not. Come, *ma petite*," she added, kindly; "it only distracts your thoughts to look about you thus; it would be but a very bitter pleasure, after all."

"What an immense crowd!" observed an officer, as the procession passed the Place de Biragues.

"And how tumultuous they are!" said another gentleman. "Pray, driver, is this usual?"

"No, monsieur," said that official, briefly.

But thick as the mob was, it thickened considerably during the short remainder of the Rue S. Antoine; and at one point the cars came to a dead stand-still.

"You may depend upon it, this is something more than common," observed the officer in a low tone; "the crowd seem quite prepared to take our part."

"Don't flatter yourself, monsieur," said his neighbour; "it is only accidental. Look! there is a clear space before us." And as he spoke they emerged on to the Fontaine de l'Eléphant.

"Well, well," said the other, shrugging his shoulders, "they say that while there is life, there is hope. They are cutting it short, though," for the horses were urged into a trot.

"All the streets round are quite full," said the first speaker. "I suppose it is to shew their dislike of the system that they don't crowd round us."

At this moment the first cart passed the corner of the Place, by the Rue de la Roquette. From every one of the surrounding streets a loud, wild, tumultuous shout arose. "Allons!" "Vive la République!" "A bas Robespierre!" "A bas la guillotine!" "A bas les Cordeliers!" were some of the cries; and at the same instant the Place was full of an armed and desperate crowd. The national troops were knocked down or wounded; the prisoners told to fly for their lives; brawny arms assisted them down the sides of the various carts; the crowd opened in all directions to facilitate their escape. While hesitating a moment what she should do, Marie felt an arm thrown around her, and heard a well-known voice, "Marie! my own Marie!"

Before she could collect her thoughts, Duchenier had lifted her from the car, and she found herself surrounded by him, Dreux, Texier, and some others whom she did not know.

"This way, this way, dearest; you will be safe in a couple of minutes."

He half carried her, half hurried her towards the Rue de Charenton. Before he had taken ten steps, a wild cry arose in the mob, "*Vite, vite! les dragons!*" And at the same moment, down the Boulevard S. Antoine was heard the burden of the terrible Marseillaise:

"Allons, enfans de la patrie!
Le jour de gloire est arrivé!
Contre nous de la tyrannie
Le glaive sanglant est élevé!"

"Take my arm, madame," cried Dreux, supporting Marie on her left side, while she clung to Duchenier with her right arm.

"Faster, faster, monsieur!" urged Texier; "it is Henriot himself."

The crowd dispersed around them; still Duchenier felt that if he could only reach the corner of the Rue de Charenton, they might be safe. But just as he was within a pace of it, five or six soldiers, with Henriot at their head, rode up.

"Here's another of them," cried he, interlarding his words with the most horrid oaths, griping Marie's shoulder with his vice-like hand, and bestowing on her an appellation which we cannot repeat.

Duchenier struck him in the face, and drew his sword. The general drew at the same moment; while Dreux, Texier, Corday, and one or two of the citizens with whom Charles had made acquaintance while waiting in the Rue de Charenton, kept back the soldiers who immediately followed. Duchenier would undoubtedly have ended the miscreant's life on the spot, had he not been embarrassed by having to protect Marie as well as himself, and been somewhat fettered by that consideration. Before many moments, Texier ran up to his assistance, and knocked Henriot from his horse, and laid him stunned on the ground.

"Now then off! now then off!" he cried; and in two minutes the whole party were in comparative safety among

some brick-grounds which then occupied the site of the present Rue des Charbonniers.

But though those in whom we are chiefly interested were preserved from pursuit, few indeed of the other victims escaped their doom. Henriot was soon sufficiently recovered from his blow to busy himself in recapturing the fugitives, and the last day of his life was sullied with the blood of nearly eighty innocent persons.

CHAPTER XXV.

"You beat them back, though?" said Robespierre to Henriot, on the steps of the Hall of Convention.

"Ay; but I lost two or three," said the general. "It was a most determined insurrection."

"Nobody of importance?"

"Nobody, except the wife of Duchenier, the brigand."

"Oh, we shall soon get hold of her again, as soon as we have rubbed through this job. And let me tell you, general, it is a pretty ugly job to rub through. Collot d'Herbois must be disposed of, or he will be our ruin; and Tallien, too——"

"Ay, ay," said Henriot, grimly, "he called me a parricide: that's enough. Let's go in."

A month before it would have been more than enough.

And where, when the Convention assembled for its afternoon session, were Charles Duchenier and Marie? In the little drawing-room of Corday's shop, which the good-natured tradesman had declared should be exclusively theirs during that evening. Some great change was evidently at hand; none could say what it would be; in the gingerbread-factor's house they were likely to be as safe as in any other place. There, then, they sat alone—how supremely, how unexpectedly happy, and yet interchanging how many sorrowful regrets, the reader can better imagine than we can describe. During those few hours of happiness the crisis of the fate of France occurred.

"That's a good job," said Dreux to Texier, when they had solaced themselves with a bottle of Burgundy in Corday's kitchen. "But I don't mean to sit here, I can tell you. There is something going on at the hall that it will be worth any body's while to see."

"What?" said Corday. "Robespierre is too strong ——"

"Is he?" cried Dreux, with a short, odd laugh.—"Texier, will you come and see?"

"Willingly," said Texier. "To tell you the truth, I think we shall be better away from this house; so many of us may get M. Corday into trouble."

The two friends accordingly hastened down to the hall; and as they were going up into the gallery, they heard within the wildest outcry. Words can give but a very faint impression of the scene they beheld on entering.

The left of the president's rostrum had been, at the opening of the session, nearly empty; but six or seven of Robespierre's most intimate friends clustered round him, and were prepared to support him to the end. Saint Just, one of these, had possession of the tribunal, and was endeavouring to address the assembly.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I rise, in the name of the Committee of Public Safety, to offer the report which we were commissioned to prepare. It will be in the recollection of the assembly, that a motion was made yesterday evening, that the able discourse which M. Robespierre had just delivered should be printed. The motion was met by an amendment, that it should be referred to the two committees; and, after a long debate, that amendment was put from the chair and carried. In obedience to the instructions which I have received from the Committee of Public Safety, I am now to present their report. That report, gentlemen, may or may not be acceptable to the assembly; but it is my duty to make it, nevertheless. Were the tribunal which I occupy the Tarpeian Rock itself, I would still persist in performing the duty of a patriot in tearing aside the veil ——"

"Let me do that," cried Tallien, springing upon the tribunal. "The republic is sacrificed to private persons, who arrogate to themselves the authority of Convention. Leave the tribunal, monsieur; let justice for once be heard."

There were loud cries of "Bravo! bravo!" "Tallien has the tribune!" Saint Just, feeling that all depended on that moment, redoubled his efforts. "M. le President," he shouted, "is a public officer, in making his report,"—the

uproar increased,—"is a public officer to be thus insulted, outraged, threatened? M. le President ——" but there came howls, hisses, and cries of "Tallien!"

"Down from the tribunal, monsieur!" cried Billaud Varennes, crossing the hall to Tallien's assistance.—"Gentlemen, there is no longer time to dally; the knife is at our very throats; a traitor and a parricide commands the troops of Paris—any moment may see them advancing against us; and Robespierre, the second Catiline,—Robespierre, who has been inflaming jealousies and fomenting dissensions from the time he entered Convention till now,—Robespierre, who cheered on his mob to the murder of the Girondists,—Robespierre, who overthrew Hébert,—Robespierre, who plotted against Danton,—Robespierre, who dares not fire a pistol himself, but has poured forth blood in pailsful by the hands of others,—Robespierre is marking us out for the fate which we ought long ago to have allotted to him."

Robespierre sprung to the tribunal. The very action seemed to cow his opponents. Saint Just stood by his side; and he was beginning,—"M. le President, I demand the Convention's summary and most just vengeance on the man that has dared ——"

Dreux, leaning over the rails of the gallery, and perfectly experienced, from his theatrical practice, in the art of making his voice heard above a popular murmur, at this moment shouted out—"*A bas le tyran!*" And a hundred voices, in wild confusion, took up the shout, and poured in from every quarter, "*A bas le tyran!*"

Robespierre evinced more courage than his friends had believed him to possess. There was one large party among which—he had noted it carefully—not a voice had been raised against him; could he but bring its suffrages to his own side, he might still weather the storm: while Barrère and the Plain were undecided, he could not despair.

By a great effort, he again made himself heard. "Shall a single man," he cried, "be allowed to attack *me*—me, on whose breath his very life hung ——"

"It is not a single man," cried Tallien, coming forward, and drawing his dagger. "I move the arrest of M. Robes-

pierre and General Henriot. And if the terror which it has hitherto suffered from the machinations of the tyrants restrain the Convention from voting with me, I vow to heaven, Robespierre, I will myself plunge this dagger into your heart!"

"Bravo, Tallien!" burst from all parts of the assembly. "*A bas Robespierre! à bas Henriot! Robespierre à la guillotine!*"

The tyrant began to tremble; and, at that critical moment, he saw Barrère advancing to the tribunal. "I claim my right of reply," he cried. "M. le President, am I not in possession of the tribunal?"

Barrère began—"M. le President, though I am not, perhaps, strictly speaking, in order, may I hope that you will allow me——"

"Barrère! Barrère!" shouted twenty or thirty voices.

"M. le President," shouted Robespierre, "I stand on my rights."

The president rose; and the confusion was hushed in a moment. "M. Barrère has the tribunal," he said.

"Now, Texier," whispered Dreux, "comes the crisis. Barrère will take all with him."

And so he did, by his first sentence. The assembly cared little for his arguments, and less for his eloquence; its members only wanted his determination; what Barrère did must be safe.

"It is my painful duty," he began, "to second the motion just made by M. Tallien."—In a moment yells of execration poured in from every quarter on Robespierre; fists were clenched and shaken at him; every term of reproach and ignominy that the language could supply was heaped on him; the outcry waxed more and more dreadful; men spat at the tyrant in token of their abhorrence; there were howls, roars, thumping, stamping, shrieks articulate and inarticulate. The president's bell rang incessantly.

Robespierre was like a wild beast at bay. He stood up in his place—he vociferated, he yelled, he roared; and every now and then the tremendous power of his voice, which his contemporaries likened for sound, as well as fatality, to the

screech-owl's note, made itself audible above the uproar. He turned round and round to all quarters; wherever the most violent epithets reached him, he endeavoured to throw them back; and a few fragments of his sentences sometimes reached the president.—"Your throat, M. le President—" "*A bas Néron!*" shouted Collot d'Herbois.—"Yours, Collot d'Herbois, all your throats have been at my mercy, and I spared them; fool, fool, not to have gashed them when I might!—" Then another burst of inarticulate screeches.—"Gentlemen of the Plain, lovers of your country—kind M. Barrère—good M. Lupin—I appeal to you!—" The Plain raised the cry of "*Robespierre à la guillotine!*" and the tyrant felt that he had no hope from them. Another moment of less confusion.—"Gentlemen of the Girondist party—let me appeal—" "Out, villain!—out, parricide!" And his enemies grinned and shewed their teeth at him, like dogs about to tear a fox in pieces.

It was then hopeless. Robespierre, in the agony of his frenzy, tore his hair, struck the desk before him with the force of a maniac, danced on the ground, blasphemed, cursed GOD, cursed himself, cursed the Convention; the sweat rolled in large drops from his face; flakes of foam fell from his mouth, as from that of a hunted beast; and still the din, against which he was contending, grew wilder and wilder; and all hope of mercy, here or hereafter, departed from the merciless.

At the very moment when the uproar was at its loudest, there burst, by an almost supernatural effort of strength, so tremendous a shriek from the throat of Robespierre, that for weeks and months afterwards it rang in the ears of those who heard it. "President of assassins, for the last time I demand a hearing!"

The exertion was too much for him; his chest laboured, his sides heaved, he sank back on the bench.

"The blood of Danton! the blood of Danton! it is choking him!" roared the Mountain.

The terrible scene was soon over. Legendre mounted the tribunal. "I move," said he, "the arrest of Robespierre, Couthon, Saint Just, Dumas, and Henriot."

"Add me too," cried Lebas.

"And Lebas," said Legendre.

The motion was carried by acclamation. "Let us get down," said Texier, "and tell the good news at once."

"So be it," cried Dreux. And they made their way through the spectators, descended the gallery stairs, and were going out, when a whisper passed through the crowd, "No one will arrest Robespierre."

Dreux pushed his way in, bidding Texier hasten to the Barrière du Trône.

"Fleuriot," said the president, "I again desire you to take M. Robespierre into custody."

"Monsieur," said that officer, "I must beg leave very respectfully to decline."

"You shall be punished, sirrah, for this," said the president.—"Vargas, you must do it."

"I cannot, monsieur."

The members of the Convention were panic-struck. If their orders were not executed in their own house, what hope that they would be obeyed in Paris?

Dreux quietly walked up to Robespierre, and seized him by the collar. "Where am I to take him, M. le President?"

The president, though of course not knowing who the new officer was, merely said, "To the Rue de Sèvres." And the officials, ashamed of their own cowardice, accompanied Dreux and his prisoner.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A SCENE of deep, deep peace. The slant rays of the declining July sun shot into the cheerful little drawing-room of Corday's house. The coffee sent up its fragrant steam; the little table, on which it was placed, was drawn near the sofa, on which Marie was lying; Charles Duchenier sat on a chair by her side, one arm thrown round her fair neck, the other possessing itself of her right hand.

"What a wonderful, wonderful day is this!" said Marie, looking up at her husband. "Oh, Charles! think what I was in the morning; and what those who travelled with me along the street S. Antoine are nŏw!"

"They were the last, dearest," said Duchenier, very unceremoniously kissing first her forehead, and then her lips. "Now that the dreadful tyrant has fallen, we may hope for better things. But come, love, I must really have you take some thing, or you will be quite worn out."

He rose, poured out a cup of coffee, and gave it to his bride. "What a beautiful evening!" she said. "Oh, how I long to be out of this fearful city! When can we do it? Let us talk of the future: we have talked enough of the sad past."

"We must wait till matters get a little settled, dear one; and then we will endeavour to get over to England. We are in no manner of danger; the Reign of Terror is over."

"I know I am foolish," said Marie, looking fondly at her husband, "but I can scarcely believe that my newly-found happiness is secure, while we are here. But I am sure you are right."

They talked a little more of their future time; and Duchenier related some of his adventures in England. The long summer afternoon was passing on, and Duchenier at length

said, "I wonder Texier has not come back again. He said that he should not be long, when he went out after bringing us this welcome intelligence about Robespierre. I will just step down stairs, and inquire."

"Nay, now," said Marie, laying her hand on his arm, "let us ring, and ask."

"Ah, Marie!" cried Duchenier, with a smile, his eye glancing on the wedding-ring, "so that faithful little piece of gold was with you through all your troubles!"

"Yes," she said, with a blush, "it was indeed,—and it was my best friend. Till the very last, Charles, I always hoped that we should meet again; and even then, I felt as if, could I but see you, all would be well."

"I did not venture to indulge any such bright anticipations," said Duchenier. "The happiness of having you—now, indeed, my very own—is as much beyond my hopes as beyond my deserts."

At this moment the bell of S. Marguerite's church rang out the tocsin; and almost simultaneously, three or four more distant belfries thundered out the same warning.

"What can that be?" said Duchenier, anxiously. "I must go, dearest,—I must, indeed,—and inquire." And hardly giving his bride time to remonstrate, he ran down stairs. In the passage he met Texier, evidently full fraught with some important intelligence.

"What is it, Texier? what is it?"

"Monsieur, every thing is at stake. The gaolers refuse to take in Robespierre; they have had much ado in lodging him and his companions in the office of the Committee of Public Safety. Fleuriot the mayor, and Payan, are raising the people, and mean to liberate them. If they do, you are lost; for Robespierre has received information where Madame Duchenier and the other prisoners, who escaped to-day, are concealed. The Convention are afraid of what they have done. Will you fly?"

"No," said Duchenier, after a pause. "It were next to certain ruin, with the Terrorists triumphant. The Convention must want officers. I will go down myself; but you must stay, and take care of your mistress."

He ran up stairs. "Marie, dearest!" he said, "the danger is not quite over. They are trying to liberate Robespierre. I must go out and obtain intelligence. But I will be back shortly. GOD, Who has preserved us so wonderfully, will not leave us now. Texier will be with you. I will be back as soon as possible." And he kissed her, and added something in a low tone of voice, that made her smile and blush.

"Not a word of Robespierre's knowing where she is, Texier," he said as he left the house. In the Rue S. Antoine he was fortunate enough to find a cabriolet; the stands being usually deserted, on account of the unsettled state of the city; and an extra fare soon set him down by the Tuileries. Here the tocsin was pealing incessantly; and Jacobins of the lowest grade were pouring in to the rescue, as the phrase went, of the mayor and Robespierre. But in all the sections that owned the authority of the Convention, the drum was fast and furiously beating to arms; the national guards, in small parties, were pouring in for the defence of the hall,—every thing betokened the rapid approach of the crisis.

As Duchenier pressed up the steps, a rumour spread through the crowd—"They have set Robespierre at liberty; he is at the Hôtel de Ville!"

"Then we are lost!" said two or three voices;—and Duchenier, merely saying, "Not if we are true to ourselves," hurried into the hall. Here all was confusion; some of the deputies were for withdrawing; a motion was made for dispersing; no one seemed ready with a plan; the president was surrounded with nine or ten deputies, all of them proposing different things.

"Let us offer terms."

"Impossible!—we must fly instantly!"

"Let us proclaim an amnesty, and ask him to take his place again."

"No, no!—fly!"

"M. le President, adjourn!"

"Dissolve!"

"I am going, or the gates will be shut."

"Offer some composition."

"What will he take but our heads?"

"Adjourn! adjourn!"

"Gentlemen," said Duchenier, quietly walking up the hall, "I am an officer, and have seen a good deal of service; can I be of any assistance in recapturing the miscreant?"

This firm tone had its effect.

"Silence! silence!" shouted the president. Comparative order being restored—"What is your name, monsieur?"

"Thévenot—Colonel Thévenot; I served in La Vendée."

"What do you propose?"

"Outlaw the prisoners—proclaim military law—march the national guards on the Hôtel de Ville—order the Jacobins to disperse—cut them to pieces if they do not."

"Who moves this?"

"I will," cried Billaud Varennes.

"I second it," said Tallien.

"Is it your pleasure?"

"Ay, ay," echoed every part of the hall.

The president drew a sheet of paper before him, and put the motion into the shape of a decree: "Listen, gentlemen:

"Ordered by the Convention, that Maximilien Robespierre, Couthon, Saint Just, Lebas, Henriot, Fleuriot mayor of Paris, Payan, and Robespierre the younger, be, for their enormous crimes, and resistance to the sovereign majesty of the nation, held and reputed as outlaws; and that all persons now in arms on their behalf do, on pain of the same outlawry, forthwith repair to their several houses.

"Hall of Convention, Thermidor 9."

It was received with acclamation. A committee of twelve were appointed to carry it out; and Duchenier was requested to go with them. A body of fifteen hundred guards was drawn up in tolerable order; and with loud cries of "*Vive la République!*" they marched forward.

Robespierre's fate was now in his own hands. The Hôtel de Ville was barricaded; a body of two thousand Jacobins were at his and his companions' orders; they had a train of

artillery; volunteers were pouring in on all sides; the tocsin rang out its peal; the scale hung between an empire and a grave. Had the democrat possessed common courage, the sun which had now set would have risen on Maximilien, King of France. One bold stroke, and the Convention must have expired at his feet. Dreux, who had from gaoler become prisoner, and was instantly ordered to be hung, was in the room where the leaders of the Jacobins were assembled, no one having leisure to attend to his execution: he thought — and others thought too — that Robespierre's senses were failing.

"Now, now, Robespierre," cried Payan; "to the hall! to the hall!"

"I can't," said Robespierre dejectedly, sinking down into a chair.

"Can't? fool and dotard! Our lives are on the cast! Be a man for once; be a man, and you can't help being a king."

"No, it's impossible," muttered the infatuated man.

"Impossible! By all the devils, you'll drive me mad! Henriot, put yourself at their head."

"Oh, ay," cried Henriot, staggering up from his chair, and catching at the table to keep himself on his feet:

"Belle Phillis, tes doux regards
Font que je ——"

"Drunken beast!" roared Payan.—"Come, Lebas—you are a man of sense — come down stairs;" and they hurried to the troops. Ere they reached them, the fiery strain,

"Allons, enfans de la patrie,"

burst on the evening air. At the end of the first stanza, however, the quick double beat of the drum told of the arrival of the national guards. It was a bad omen for the Jacobins that their troops retreated closer to the walls of the Hôtel de Ville.

Robespierre, meanwhile, sat with his elbows on his knees, and hid his face in his hands. All his mind seemed changed; he looked the image of a criminal before his execution.

"Hallo!" hiccoughed Henriot; "somebody must — some-

body must—hang—that gentleman—" pointing to Dreux; and attempting to move for that purpose, he fell on the floor. Dumas and Saint Just were looking from the window, in deep dejection; Couthon, pinned by his natural infirmity to his chair, sat caressing his spaniel.

In the mean time Duchenier's clear voice was heard below: "Second division, to the left about wheel! March! Halt! To the right about face! That piece opposite the door—those two by that house—that eight-pounder here! Stand to your guns! Now, gentlemen, I think you might read the proclamation."

Billaud-Varennes did so. Duchenier marked the irresolution of the Jacobins; and directly the order was finished, he gave the word, "Forward!" On came the long lines; the Terrorists slunk right and left; looked this way and that way; and dispersed with the utmost rapidity. Still the Hôtel itself was held out.

"Blow in that gate!" cried Duchenier.

Dreux heard the order; and at the same moment those of the Jacobins who had gone into the court came rushing up in wild disorder.

"Wretch!" cried Payan to Robespierre, "you have ruined us!"

"Is it all over?" asked Couthon.

"We shall be prisoners in a moment. Before I am, I will punish this drunkard." And raising Henriot by a great effort of strength, he threw him out of the window.

"I never will be a prisoner," cried Lebas, drawing out a pistol. "Head or heart, Payan?"

"Head's surest," he answered.

"Very well." He looked to the priming of his pistol; put the muzzle to his forehead, brought his hand up to the level of his head, and saying, "I advise you to follow my example," pulled the trigger, and fell a corpse on the floor.

Couthon was brandishing a long knife, and aiming it at his breast. "Pray kill me, pray kill me," he cried; "I cannot do it—oh, I cannot do it!" And, as he spoke, he inflicted a slight wound on his breast, and shrieked with the pain.

"Coward!" cried the younger Robespierre. "Here goes!" And he leapt out of the window; but was taken up by the national guards alive.

"Must I do it? must I do it?" said Maximilien Robespierre, his face turning pale, his hands shaking, his knees knocking together. He took out a pistol, looked at the priming, held it to his head, put it down again, looked at it a second time, put it to his chest, and then laid it down on the table, saying, "I can't."

"Let me, then," said Payan, coming up to him.

"No, no!" cried Robespierre, snatching up the pistol in terror; "I will myself." And he held it to his neck. At that moment the door was burst open; and whether he screwed up his courage to the point, or unintentionally pressed too hard on the trigger, it fell, the bullet shattered his jaw, and lodged in the wall.

There was a dismal cry of anguish. The monster fell; blood poured from his mouth and cheek; and the shouts of the advancing soldiers were heard.

"Oh, M. Dreux! oh, kind M. Dreux! pray, for God's sake, look to my wound!" And two long screams ended the sentence.

Dreux said nothing; but taking a dirty towel which lay on the table, he tied up the tyrant's head to his best ability. So hideous were the distortions and outcries of the wretch, that, as he put a deal box to serve for a pillow as he lay on the floor, the actor said to himself: "This is not chance. There must be a God."

CHAPTER XXVII.

OH, what a moment was that, when Duchenier, after committing the prisoners to the care of the Commissioners, excused himself to them on the plea of urgent business, and hurried back to the Barrière du Trône! It was ten o'clock when he knocked at the door; in another moment Marie was in his arms. As he held her in the joyful certainty that all danger was now over, he could hear the beating of her heart, in her eager agitation to learn his news.

"Thank GOD, thank GOD, Marie, it is all safe now! you know not what a danger we have escaped." And leading her into the drawing-room, he told her all that had passed during his absence.

"What do we not owe to Texier!" said Marie at length. "Had it not been for his patient watching in Paris, and his determination to remain by me to the last, we should not now have been seated together, Charles. And he had almost saved my poor father, too; but GOD willed it otherwise."

"We must persuade him, love, to go with us to England for a while; this storm will not last for ever. And Dreux, too, we must provide for in some way." And so they talked for some half hour longer, the silence deepening and deepening around them; and every additional moment giving further security that all popular commotion was over. The worthy tradesman Corday, after a preliminary knock, came in to say that he had received a message from Dreux, to the effect that he had been much complimented by the Convention for his intrepidity, and had the promise of some official place in the hall; and that he was one of the guards appointed over Robespierre and the other leaders of the Terrorists.

Duchenier thanked the good man for all his kindness; and begged him to think in what way he might serve him best.

"*Bien obligé*, monsieur. I promise you, if ever I need any little assistance, not to forget your offer. There is the half-past ten; it is high time to be shutting up the house. Good night, monsieur; good night, madame."

And "Good night, dear Marie," said Duchenier with a smile, when their worthy hostess entered the room to conduct her to her apartment.

Our scene still lies in that comfortable little drawing-room; but we must go on a few hours.

It was a bright blue morning; a fresh breeze tempered the excessive heat; a few fleecy clouds sailed across the sky; it was one of those spring-like days that sometimes occur in the middle of summer. The table was spread for breakfast; Duchenier was looking from the open window, when Corday entered. We should remark, that the bow-window at which Duchenier was standing, though not looking directly on the Barrière du Trône, yet sideways commanded a view of the new guillotine.

"It will be an awful sight, monsieur," said the gingerbread factor, after giving good morning to his guest. "They say that there will be such a crowd to see Robespierre beheaded as Paris never turned out before."

"He is condemned, then?" inquired Charles.

"They would not admit him to the bar, monsieur; they sentenced him as an outlaw without a hearing."

"What time is it to be?" inquired Duchenier.

"At half-past ten, they say, monsieur; but they will never get down here by then.—Good morning, madame," as Marie entered the room.—"They say, monsieur, that there is a general amnesty to be proclaimed at once; and even already people are beginning to recover their spirits. But I will not keep you from breakfast."

"Dearest," said Duchenier, when that meal was over, "there is one awful thing more that must happen; and then, I trust, there will be some peace for France."

"One awful thing more?—Oh, what is it?"

"Robespierre," said her husband, looking very grave, "is to be executed this morning; and they say the concourse of people to see him die will be somewhat tremendous. I

almost wonder he is alive still. I did not tell you last night, because you had enough to terrify and shock you; but GOD visited those wretched men with no ordinary visitation."

"How do you mean?" asked his bride, turning pale.

Duchenier told her the principal circumstances; and they then sat together for nearly two hours, finding a mournful pleasure in going over the past again and again, and gilding the future with all the fancied (and to them, in the course of years, realised) sunshine of hope. Towards eleven o'clock, however, an indistinct murmur was heard in the direction of the Fauxbourg S. Antoine; and gradually the shouts and execrations of a mob came more and more distinct on the ear.

"That must be the procession," said Duchenier gravely. "It *is* an awful thing, dearest," for Marie trembled excessively; "but it is the last, and it is necessary."

"Cannot I go into some other room?" she inquired, in a faint voice.

"The back rooms are quite as much open to the *Place* as the front. You had better sit down on the sofa, love; you cannot possibly see any thing there. We must not shut the shutters, or the mob may think that it is a mark of sorrow for Robespierre."

Duchenier led her to the sofa, soothed her by a few tender words, and then walked to the window. The shouts grew louder and louder; there were groans, hisses, yells, shouts of derision, of mockery, of execration,—a perfect tempest of popular excitement. Slowly, very slowly, the car moved forward; at last it entered the *Place*, and the clamour grew louder and the execrations more brutal. Robespierre, Henriot, Couthon, the younger Robespierre, Saint Just, all grievously wounded, lay huddled together in the bottom of the vehicle; and when it stopped at the foot of the guillotine, one long, loud, universal shout of applause rent the air.

"What is that?" asked Marie, fearfully.

"They are going to take them up the scaffold."

Marie fell on her knees, and endeavoured to bury her face as much as might be in the cushions of the sofa.

A minute more passed; then Duchenier covered his eyes with his hands; and there came, amidst the most profound

silence on the part of the mob, a wild, piercing, and most unearthly shriek of agony. The executioner had led Robespierre to the slide.

"Come," said that functionary, "we can't get on so; you must take that rag off."

Robespierre shook his head, and pointed to his jaw.

"I'm not going to have my steel blunted for that, citoyen; come, I'll do it for you."

He tore off the towel; the shattered jaw dropped; and then it was that the wretch uttered that horrible yell.

A minute after, and the quick rattle of the guillotine was heard.

"Look up, dearest," said Duchenier, crossing the room to his bride, "it is over now; Robespierre is dead!"

It was a lovely evening in June, that, descending the sweet range of the Gatines, I sauntered on towards the little village spire, that seemed to point out a resting-place for the night. That day, with break of morning, I had started from Chantonnay; but many a fair church had delayed me, and I feared that night might close in around me ere I could extricate myself from the intricate lanes of that part of Poitou. Now no such fear; and tightening the straps of my knapsack a little, I stepped more briskly onwards into the valley.

"Has monsieur come far?" asked an old peasant whom I met on the narrow bridge that crosses the valley stream.

"From Chantonnay, *mon ami*. But will you tell me what is the name of the village which I see yonder?"

"Cerisay," said he.

"Shall I find an auberge there, where one might get a night's lodging?"

"I fear not," he answered; "but the priest will take you in, I doubt not."

"I must trespass on his hospitality then, I am afraid. Good night."

"Good night, monsieur. Be sure to turn to the left at the Grange Neuve."

To the left accordingly I turned, and some ten minutes more brought me to the great gates of the avenue that led to the chateau. As I was passing them, a venerable-looking old gentleman, but tall and strong for his apparent age, came down from the village, and turned up towards them.

"You are a stranger to our parts, monsieur?" he asked, with a polite bow.

"Perfectly, monsieur. Till the last ten days I knew nothing of La Vendée."

"You are English too, I see. I owe much to your country. Are you going much further to-night?"

"Only to the village, if I can find lodging there."

"Oh! that you will not do. Mine host of the *Coq Blanc* sells good wine; but as to a bed, I dare say he has never been asked for such a thing. No, no; you must take a bed at the chateau to-night; I will have the honour of shewing you the way thither."

With all suitable acknowledgments, I followed my new friend; and was soon given in charge to an old servant, who seemed to officiate as a kind of major-domo.

"Let monsieur have every thing he wants, Texier; and then shew him into the drawing-room."

Into the drawing-room accordingly the old servant, in process of time, ushered me; and there, coffee having been just served up, I found my worthy host, a very pleasing old lady, evidently the mistress of the house, and a fair girl, whose likeness to the latter amply proved her relationship as granddaughter.

"Monsieur," said the lord of the mansion, "let me introduce you to Madame Duchenier. My granddaughter, Louise."

After a few civil speeches, "Now, monsieur," said M. Duchenier, "your walk over the hills must, or ought to have, given you an appetite; and my cook, who has been in England, is very busy with what she calls some *véritable rosbif à l'Anglais*, and what I hope you will find something of an approximation to a beef-steak."

The promised dish was brought in; and though M. Duchenier and I might disagree as to the resemblance to the

English steak, by the time I had finished the meal, his kindness, and that of the lady of the house, made me feel completely at home.

"That is a copy from Vernet's picture of the attack on Nantes, is it not?" I asked; looking at one which hung over the chimney-piece.

"It is," answered my host. "I can testify to its fidelity, for I was there myself."

"Were you indeed, monsieur?" And I asked with so much interest, that he smiled, and said—

"Yes; our early lot was cast in troublesome times; was it not, Marie? One way or the other, my wife and I were engaged in, or spectators of, a good many of the stirring events in La Vendée, and in Paris too."

One question and reply led on to others; and that evening M. Duchenier related to me a good part of the tale the reader has finished.

"I have read a Jewish proverb," he said, "'When Israel is in the brick-kiln, then cometh Moses.' And so it was with us. Few had darker clouds at the outset of their life; few more uninterrupted sunshine afterwards. And here we live, you see, quite in a patriarchal manner; our children settled at short distances around us, and one or other of their little ones constantly with us. But you really must not think of going for a day or two, monsieur. To-morrow, Louise here—she is quite a chronicler of the place—shall shew you all the spots round that are connected with our history; where De Cailly drove us back,—where La Force made his way in,—and all the rest of it. Will you not, Louise?"

"That I will gladly," she said.

And so she did.

THE END.

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